

## **Episode 74: Daril was shot as a rookie policeman**

When you're a police officer, one of the things you learn as part of your training is that there's no such thing as a routine encounter, or a "regular" traffic stop. In most cases, you don't know the person you're about to interact with, or if they have a criminal history, or how desperate they might be.

My guest today, Daril, found that out the hard way. He was a rookie officer, working the morning shift on a weekend, and he wasn't necessarily expecting anything exciting to happen. But then he unknowingly crossed paths with a career criminal who had recently escaped from prison, and that man was determined to do anything to avoid being captured.

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### **Scott**

How old were you when you decided to become a police officer?

### **Daril**

When I actually decided I wanted to get tested and what not, I was probably about 19 years old. I was too young to test because you had to be 21 back then. I had tested with LA before I tested with Denver.

That's actually a neat story. I have a cousin who's a cop in LA and he said, "Go take the test in all these little police departments. You're going to fail them all." He was right. He said, "Then go to LAPD and take your test and you'll be ready." He was right because when I did go to LA I got accepted. Then I had to make a decision between living in LA and coming back to Denver. I came back to Denver and did the same exact thing.

### **Scott**

What was the reason for failing at all of the little departments?

### **Daril**

Well you don't really know what they're looking for. Usually the little departments pattern their tests after the home ruling PD. For Denver I went to Arvata, Aurora and Lakewood. In California I went to Torrance and all the smaller police departments. It's true that you'll bomb out because you don't know what they want. Over time you start to figure out what they want. It worked though, I can tell you that.

### **Scott**

So you had been a cop for a couple of years before this thing we're going to talk about happened to you in Denver. How old were you at that point?

### **Daril**

I think I was 21 or 22. I came on in 1970 and I got shot October 3rd, 1971.

### **Scott**

So just almost a couple of years then.

### **Daril**

Yep. I was a rookie.

**Scott**

Take us through what happened that day. You were doing the morning shift on a Sunday.

**Daril**

It was kind of a chilly time and part of my precinct was projects. I had just gotten a twist and chocolate milk at Winchell's and I was headed to Sunnyside Drug to get a Sunday paper. I was going down Mariposa way when I spotted this little black Chevy. There were 2 females in it and the passenger was a male and he had this weird Castro hat on and it had some buttons on it. He looked like a tough guy.

So I got nosy and pulled around and got behind him. I walked up to the passenger side and ID'd them. I asked him for his driver's license and he acted like he could only speak Spanish. I didn't believe him. He had a coat laying across his leg so I took that off and put it on the top of the car. He pulled a wallet out and in the wallet he had some pictures of some children and a social security card with the name Luis Archeleta on it. I got him out of the car and was going to pat him down, because this guy looked like a con.

**Scott**

So I've gotta just ask you this. At this point you were interrogating him and asking him questions just based on instinct right? Did you need a reason back then to stop somebody?

**Daril**

Not really.

**Scott**

So it's different today then obviously.

**Daril**

Oh yeah. It's different today because they want you to have probable cause and what not. Back then your probable cause was that the guy looked like a character and now he was producing a social security card with no picture ID and had joint tattoos.

Anyway, I get him to the back of the car and I tell him to put his hands on the trunk. Rather than do that, he turns sideways and is shuffling down the trunk with his butt towards the trunk and his right elbow going up. Well, I was really close to him, so I decided I was going to hit him and try to get the gun away from him. I hit him in the temple and knocked his sunglasses and hat off. Stupidly, I reached across his body because this guy had a revolver, and I was really no match for him. What I didn't know was that he was pumping iron in the penitentiary and he was a beast.

He leveled the gun and pulled the trigger. I went down. He was running off and I had my gun but I didn't shoot the guy. There were kids and people around, and they are always watching what you do when you make a stop in the projects. So I had to crawl to the car because we didn't have radios that came out like they do today.

**Scott**

Oh so you had to get back to your car just to radio for help?

**Daril**

That's right. Secondly, we didn't have bulletproof vests so that's why I took one in the 9 ring.

**Scott**

Where is that? What is that section?

**Daril**

Imagine a body target and 10 is your heart area, 9 is the next ring around it, 8 is the one around that and so on. It goes from the heart on out. So we say the 9 ring.

So what we didn't know at that time was that he was an escapee from California. He escaped from a penitentiary there. He was doing time with a certain individual who told him, "Well go to Denver and you can hide out there with my old lady. You'll be safe there." That's why he was in Denver.

**Scott**

If you would have known that ahead of time you probably would have approached him a little bit differently right?

**Daril**

Oh yeah. I'd have taken him at gunpoint and called for backup. Back in those days, the morning shift was solo cars not 2 man cars. Something that I've never believed in. I've always felt that every shift should have nothing but 2 man cars.

**Scott**

What did it feel like to get shot?

**Daril**

Oh my goodness. It kind of knocked the wind out of me and I couldn't get my legs to work. I had to crawl to the car and I was thinking, "God am I shot in the spine?" I didn't know. It wasn't really painful. It didn't get painful until later (laughs).

**Scott**

Maybe because of adrenaline?

**Daril**

Probably. So that was basically the shooting incident itself.

**Scott**

So you were probably out of commission for a while.

**Daril**

Oh yeah, many weeks. I was in the hospital for actually around 3 weeks. The bullet did a lot of damage so I was lucky to be alive. Now if I had it to do over, knowing what I know now or learned 2 years later. I would have backed up, pulled my gun and shot it out with him. I would have never hit him or tried to fight him. It was stupid on my part.

**Scott**

Yeah but you were still a rookie.

**Daril**

That's true.

**Scott**

So he ran off, then what happened from that point?

**Daril**

The Crusade for Justice got him out of Denver and took him to Mexico. We've never been able to verify but we think he was involved in a shooting with a bunch of other guys that were dealing narcotics and being kind of like rebels in a way. They were anti-everything.

Well, he got caught, and they were torturing him supposedly. He later says that they had him sitting on ice blocks and beat him with a rubber hose. I don't know if that's true, but he made his way to an American consulate and said, "Hey, get me out of here I shot a cop in Denver." That's how we got him back. That's when we learned that his real name was Lawrence Pusateri.

**Scott**

So he was being treated so badly in Mexico that he wanted to come back and be tried for shooting you?

**Daril**

(laughs) Absolutely. That was the lesser of the 2 evils. He thought that they were going to kill him. So we got him back and went to trial. He got 9.5-14 years. I didn't think that was a very big sentence, but that's what he got.

Down the road in 1975, he and a guy named Sydney Riley went to the state hospital. All of the inmates in Colorado, if they need to have an operation or procedure they have to go to the state hospital in Pueblo. They went there and asked to use the bathroom where they had guns waiting for them. They armed themselves and had an accomplice that had a car there waiting for them. They shackled up the 2 guards in the bathroom and made their escape.

**Scott**

This sounds like a movie.

**Daril**

No kidding, I agree. It's like a movie script.

**Scott**

So the whole hospital trip they had planned this all out ahead of time?

**Daril**

Oh yeah. They had it orchestrated beautifully. If I get a chance to talk to him, which I'm going to try to do when he hits Canyon City, I'm going to congratulate him.

**Scott**

This escape during the hospital trip; would today's procedures have prevented that kind of escape?

**Daril**

I have no idea. You know how he escaped in California? He built a dummy in his bed so it looked like he was sleeping. He was at some camp and that's how he escaped.

**Scott**

This guy knows how to get away.

**Daril**

He sure does, yep.

**Scott**

That must have been kind of discouraging for you to realize, "Wow this guys shot me and now he's free again."

**Daril**

Yeah. I initially tried to find him. I really didn't think he'd be in Denver. It's not that we didn't look there, we contacted my informants and all of that trying to find him, but I didn't think he'd go there. I knew he wouldn't go back to Mexico, and I didn't think he'd go back to California where his mother was. I was right. The 3 states I thought he might have lived in, he did.

Now Sydney Riley, who escaped with him, was caught pretty quickly. Of course, Pusateri has bragged when they arrested him that he was on the run longer than anybody. Whitey Bulger was only on the run for 18 years.

**Scott**

So you didn't give up on tracking this guy down.

**Daril**

No no no. I made it kind of like a hobby. For the past 46 years, I'd contact my informants and family members of the gals that were in the car and just general bad guys. They would talk and I know they were saying that the crazy Daril Cinquanta is still looking for the guy that shot him. Anyway, it did pay off.

**Scott**

So the rest of your career you kept track of and tried to find him, but you kept looking even after he retired?

**Daril**

Oh yeah. I just kept hammering away. I'm pretty persistent. It was June 24,2020 when I got a phone call. This person said, "You know, I've been thinking about it and I'm going to tell you where your guy that shot you is. This guy is living in Espinola, Mexico and is running under the name Ramon Montoya. He's married to Esther Chicon." Then he gave me the address. That's all the information he gave me.

**Scott**

Who was this guy?

**Daril**

I have no idea. Probably somebody that owed me. I took that information and plugged it into my databases. Low and behold he popped up, Roman Montoya. He had a phony date of birth, Esther Chicon popped up as well and the address he gave me. I kept digging from there and found that he was arrested in Henderson, New Mexico in 2011 for a DWAI. I called them but they couldn't or wouldn't give me a picture and couldn't find his fingerprint card.

The picture I eventually got confirmed it was him. I called Lieutenant Bacha at the Espinola police department and laid all this out for him and sent him all the information that I had developed. I developed more information even, I found his first wife. When he first escaped he married Sterling Montoya from the Sante Fe area and had 3 kids with her.

When the FBI interviewed her she said, "I divorced him because he was mean and violent and he sexually assaulted my daughter." I later called her and she was really cooperative. She said, "I'm glad you survived meeting him because he's really dangerous." I also tried to call his other family, the Chicon family, except they didn't like me and wouldn't talk to me. They said I was heartless going after an old man that was sick.

**Scott**

I can't imagine you had a whole lot of sympathy for him.

**Daril**

No, I didn't care. I don't care if they like me or dislike me.

**Scott**

It's pretty amazing that he stayed in the United States though.

**Daril**

This guy is smarter than I ever thought. To stay hidden for 46 years. Think about that, 46 years. Darlene and one of his sons, Mario, said that he admitted to them that he shot a cop in Denver and that he'd been on the run. Maybe it's true. Understand that he had a valid driver's license, a social security card, both under the name Montoya, and a fake date of birth. Once you have those items and they are real government ID's, how are they going to get you? They're only going to get you if you get arrested and they fingerprint you and send the prints to the FBI and then they run them through their computer. That's how they catch a lot of people.

**Scott**

Right, because they hit a match.

**Daril**

Yep. You've gotta hand it to him, this guy stayed hidden for 46 years.

**Scott**

Yeah that's just incredible to me. I would think from his standpoint, maybe after 8 years or 10 years, he's probably thinking, "Hey I'm in the clear. I got away with it." Then especially after 40 years or longer, he's thinking, "There's no way they're ever going to catch me now."

**Daril**

It's true.

**Scott**

So this local police chief helped you out?

**Daril**

He wasn't a police chief, he was the lieutenant, and yes he did. The only thing he did that really upset me was he called the FBI. The first thing they did was say, "Well we want to debrief your

informant." I said, "That ain't gonna happen." Even if I knew who the informant was I wouldn't let them near him. I have a lot of experience dealing with the FBI and I wouldn't let them near him.

**Scott**

Why is that?

**Daril**

Well, because they'd want to document him and make him a witness. He may have to take the stand. They burn everybody. Then they put them in witness protection. I just wasn't going to play their game; I know their game.

**Scott**

You didn't know who it was anyway so you couldn't have given him up.

**Daril**

No, I couldn't have. I wouldn't have. Everything he gave me was right on. The information I developed from there was right on too. That's how we got him back. At the time of his arrest he told the FBI and SWAT team, "I don't know who you're looking for but it's not me." They had him show them his bare chest and arms, and there were the tattoos. I have a picture of him in my book where it shows all those tattoos. Then his fingerprints matched too, so he wasn't going anywhere.

When they arrested him they said he was sucking oxygen. Of course we knew that because they saw an oxygen truck delivering oxygen to him. I asked, "Is he able to stand?" They said, "Oh yeah." I asked, "Can he walk?" They said, "Yeah but he has a wheelchair." I said, "It doesn't matter, he's looking and planning another escape. Trust me I know this man." He is, he's going to try to escape again.

**Scott**

Man you'd think at some point he'd just give up and say, "Look, let me just live out my days and not try to be on the run anymore."

**Daril**

No, that's no fun. I don't believe it.

**Scott**

When he was arrested he was living there with his wife and some other relatives. Did that wife know about his past with you or do you know?

**Daril**

No. She says that she had no idea that he was a fugitive and shot a cop. She didn't tell me that but she told the FBI that in Espinola. The other wife though, she was very forthcoming with me and said she knew but she was afraid of him. When they first showed her a picture and asked, "Do you know this person?" She denied it because she's afraid of him.

**Scott**

That's common though in an abuse situation, right?

**Daril**

Right.

**Scott**

So this guy, how old is he now?

**Daril**

I think he's 77. His real date of birth was in 1943.

**Scott**

Boy what a life.

**Daril**

Oh my goodness.

**Scott**

What is his current legal status?

**Daril**

Well, he's in what they call 'reception and diagnostic.' It's a building on Smith road in Denver where everybody goes prior to being shipped to an institution like Canyon City or Buena Vista or one of the privately owned penitentiaries. He's been there quite a while. He went to a hearing recently and they served a writ of habeas corpus, which from my understanding means they have to produce the body and bring him to the court. I tuned into court that day but I never got to see him; I wanted to see what he looked like.

They have a picture of him on the department of corrections website, you can go there and see what he looks like, but he has an oxygen thing in his nose. The 2011 picture is a good picture of him. The way I got that was by going to mugshots.com and they had 4 of his pictures on that website from when he got arrested in New Mexico.

**Scott**

We'll have these pictures you're talking about in the show notes for this episode if people want to look at that. So he's in Denver, and you're in Denver. Can you just go visit him?

**Daril**

No. I have to wait for him to go to Canyon City. Then they have to send him a request and he has to say, "Ok, I will meet with him." He can deny me access to him.

**Scott**

Do you think he'd want to meet with you?

**Daril**

I don't know. I don't know what the upside is and there may not be one for him.

**Scott**

He may just want to see this guy who's been chasing him for 46 years.

**Daril**

(laughs) Yeah. Anyway, he's going to trial if he doesn't take a deal for the escape. Something I didn't know was that there is no statute of limitation on escape in the state of Colorado.

Secondly, the day he escaped his time stopped. That 9.5-14 stopped. If he would've just stayed in jail he would've been out.

**Scott**

Long ago he would've been out.

**Daril**

Long long ago.

**Scott**

Of course, somebody with his mentality though, he would have done something and he'd be back in prison anyway.

**Daril**

Maybe. He'd have done about 7 years and he would have been gone and back in circulation.

**Scott**

Assuming he says he's ok with meeting you, what do you say to him?

**Daril**

Well, I've thought about that. What I was going to do was first of all congratulate him for being on the run for 46 years, I mean that is an achievement. That's probably how I would start out the conversation with him.

**Scott**

A worthy opponent so to speak.

**Daril**

Oh he was really worthy, formidable even. He was really hard to find. I would never have found him if this person hadn't come forward.

**Scott**

Well you have a book out. You have quite a career as a police officer.

**Daril**

I did.

**Scott**

Your book is called, "The Blue Chameleon: The Life Story of a Super Cop." What's the reference to the chameleon?

**Daril**

Oh you'd have to read the book (laughs).

**Scott**

That's a good little tease, I like that.

**Daril**

What's cool about the book is that the cover is the shirt I was wearing the day I got shot. After I got out of the hospital I went back and got the shirt I was wearing, and they gave it to me. It has the bullet hole and the evidence tag still on it. So I made a book cover out of it.

**Scott**

That's a great idea, I love that.

**Daril**

It was different.

**Scott**

In the book you talk about your career as a cop and you were controversial to say the least.

**Daril**

Very.

**Scott**

Can you talk about that a little bit?

**Daril**

Well, I started getting really good at being a policeman and I had a knack for developing informants. I did all sorts of big cases and got a lot of publicity. Not that I looked for it, it just came. So I wrote a book because there were a lot of rumors and I wanted to set the record straight about my career. There were rumors when I retired that I got fired and all of that.

So I had to set the record straight to go on. So I wrote this book and it turned out to be a great book. It's won a bunch of awards and I'm just adding an 18th chapter, and that's about chasing Pusateri and him being arrested. I'm done with that whole chapter now. I'm switching publisher's so as soon as I get a publisher, the next book will have that chapter in it.

**Scott**

Well we'll put links to your website and where to get the book in the show notes of this episode so people can check that out. Daril I applaud you for your persistence in trying to catch this guy. I'm glad he's back in prison where he belongs. Thanks for telling your story.

**Daril**

Thanks for asking.

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If you want to find out more about Daril, and the book he wrote about his life-long career as a police officer, check out his website, which is [TheBlueChameleon.net](http://TheBlueChameleon.net).

And I wanted to let you know about a few ways you can connect with me and the podcast, that you might not be aware of –

First up, do you get my emails? I send out an email every time a new episode comes out, and I'd love to include you in that. You can subscribe, and it's free of course, at [WhatWasThatLike.com/email](mailto:WhatWasThatLike.com@email).

And if you're on Reddit, and I know there are some listeners who are die-hard redditors, this podcast has its own subreddit. I think right now there are only about a hundred people subscribed there, but it keeps growing steadily. That's at [reddit.com/r/whatwasthatlike](https://reddit.com/r/whatwasthatlike)

And, I also post something new and unusual on Instagram almost every day. And there are over 10k people following me there, which is [Instagram.com/whatwasthatlike](https://Instagram.com/whatwasthatlike)

And if that's not enough, you've heard me invite you already to our Facebook group, where we have about 1200 podcast listeners having discussions about all kinds of stuff.  
[WhatWasThatLike.com/facebook](https://WhatWasThatLike.com/facebook)

All right, so that should give you enough ways to stay in touch and keep up with what's going on!

And to close out the show, something a little different.

I get a lot of people contacting me with their stories, to see if THEIR story might be a podcast episode. For the vast majority, I have to decline. And there are LOTS of reasons for this, which I won't go into right here. For a lot of them, the story itself might be really interesting, but for one reason or another it's just not a good fit for an episode.

So to end today's show, I'd like for you to hear a few of those. Take care. I'll see you in two weeks.

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### **Amber**

My father was in an accident involving a train when I was a child. He was out late with some friends and on his way home when he came upon an uncontrolled railroad crossing. Which essentially means that there are no signals or gates. It's just a crossing on a country road. He didn't see the train approaching. It hit him and he died instantly. My family really struggled with it.

To this day I have not asked where it happened specifically. We don't talk about it often. I know if I knew the location I would never be able to cross the tracks again. Everytime I cross tracks I wonder if those are the ones where it happened. I'm still working on healing from it despite the fact that it's been 17 years now. It's still prevalent in my mind. Every time I hear a train whistle or see railroad tracks I think of him.

One strange thing about his passing was that shortly before he died we went to Six Flags as a family. When we were waiting in line they had the sweepstakes that you could enter in a little plastic box. He entered us for a free trip to Hawaii. I always wondered if people ever win those things. For whatever reason, after he passed we got a phone call and we had won. We ended up spending 2 weeks in Hawaii after he died. He was the type of person that loved the beach. In my eyes it was a gift from him. To this day I will forever feel that way.

I'm definitely looking for support groups if anyone else has been through something similar, family members lost in car accidents due to a train. You can reach out to me and [amberrhasty@gmail.com](mailto:amberrhasty@gmail.com). Thank you.

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## **Debra**

Visiting my Uncle Bob and Aunt Margie's dairy farm was something I looked forward to on our once a year family trip to the country. I loved the cows and the corn field. Their dogs were a pleasure too since we didn't have any pets. Aunt Margie would cook up a great country supper when we visited. Uncle Bob once gave me and my sister a ride on the tractor that was pulling a corn harvester through the field. It was exhilarating to watch the corn fly up from the stalk and fall into the large container behind the tractor to be brought to the silo. Those were the best days and I wished I could live on a farm instead of in the city.

I had just turned 11 before this visit in the late 1950s. It was getting late in the day and we hadn't been to the corn field yet. I wanted badly to stand next to those tall stalks and walk around a bit. The adults were sitting in chairs near the garden and I stood in front of my father and asked, "Can I go for a walk in the corn field?" He ignored me and kept conversing with Uncle Bob. So I stood in front of my mother and asked the same question. She wouldn't answer me. These were the days of children being seen and not heard.

I decided it was getting late and we would be leaving soon. So I made the decision to go see the cornfield by myself. I walked past the silo and came to the gate in the fence. I unlatched it and walked through onto a dirt ground. The cornfield was in sight. I took 4 steps toward it and then my feet wouldn't move anymore. I didn't understand what was happening. I tried to turn around toward the gate but my feet and legs wouldn't follow my upper body. I felt desperate and tried to reach the fence for something to hang onto but it was out of reach. I was sinking fast in the mud.

I wondered how I could remedy this. Could I scream? My 11 year old logic told me that my parents didn't hear me when I was standing right in front of them, so most likely they would not hear me now. The mud was up to the bottom of my chest and I reasoned that soon I may need to hold my breath. I knew I could hold it for a long time because I practiced at the pool in town. I wondered how much further I would sink.

The mud was up to my neck when suddenly I saw my cousin running toward me. A look of shock was on her face as she spun back around leaving a trail of dust at her feet as she ran with all her might to get help. Soon the only way to survive was to tilt my head back as far as I could and stare at the sky. I looked down my nose and saw my Aunt Margie running full blast toward me. Then I felt her hands reach in and grab my arms and pull my muddy body out of that sink hole.

My Aunt hosed me off in the cow barn and explained that it had rained for 3 days and caused a sinkhole right where I stepped. When I asked if I would have drowned in that mud, she said, "Yes." Sadly we never visited the farm again. It's no wonder I had nightmares and panic attacks.

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## **James**

Hi, this is James Clattenberg. This story is about a small plane crash in the Turks and Caicos Islands back in 1992. I went to the island with my friend Dave and we first went to Provo and were there for a few days. This big storm came in. We had already planned to go to Salt Caye for the middle of the trip and there was a pilot who was going to take us to this little island where there were less than 100 residents.

It was very stormy and we met the pilot the day before. He said, "Are you sure you guys still want to go tomorrow? It's going to be very stormy but we should be fine." We said, "Sure." We were staying at this small little guest house on Salt Caye and we got in contact with the owner of the inn because he was going to pick us up and take us to the property.

We got on the plane that morning and it was very windy. The plane was a 5 seater Cessna with only 1 door on the passenger side. The pilot jumped in and then I got into the back row of 3 very small seats and my friend Dave got in the front. It was very windy. Granted it was a small plane, but it was just bouncing all over the place so I was holding onto either side. This was only a 10 minute flight from Provo to Salt Caye.

We start to land. I'm not a pilot but I know that you are supposed to land against the wind, not with the wind behind you. We could see this small little runway that was surrounded by barbed wire to keep out the donkeys and wild bulls that roamed the island. We were landing and the wind was pushing us extremely fast towards this runway. We basically just slammed into the ground and the pilot said, "Oh shit!" and immediately turned the wheel and the landing gear just collapsed. We were scraping along sideways towards the end of the runway. At the end of the runway there was that row of barbed wire.

The propeller flies off. We were skidding. It was like being in a car in the snow, you don't know when it's going to stop. We were just skidding along and then all of the sudden the plane stopped probably 10 feet short of the end of the runway. One wing was through the barbed wire and then beyond that there was a ditch.

The pilot immediately unbuckles his seat belt, jumps over my big football player friend Dave, and runs down the runway and leaves us there. We were stranded thinking, "Oh my god is this plane going to blow up?" It all happened so quick and we just slammed into the runway. We both thought the plane was going to explode. So the pilot ran off, we got out of our seatbelts and got out of the plane.

We saw the guy who owned the inn who was there to pick us up. He looks at us and says, "I have lived on this island for 15 years, I have never seen a plane come in so fast. I thought you guys were goners. Now would you like a cocktail, or do you need to change your underwear?" (laughs) I laugh about it now but it was very scary.

Then there were other things that happened on that island. I was chased by a donkey and sucked into the ocean. In the end we laughed about it, but we called it Death island. Hopefully nothing like that will ever happen again. Anyways, that's my little airplane crash story.