

# Uber driver arraigned on 6 murder counts: What we know

John Bacon, USA TODAY, Katrease Stafford, Detroit Free Press 2:56 p.m. EST February 22, 2016



(Photo: Andraya Croft, The Detroit Free Press)

Jason Dalton, 45, was arraigned Monday on six counts of murder, two counts of assault with intent to commit murder and eight felony firearm counts in connection with a shooting spree that left six people dead Saturday night in and around Kalamazoo, Mich. Here is what we know.

Dalton, wearing glasses and an orange jump suit, made a video appearance from jail. He sat quietly while the charges were read, responding with brief answers to a judge's basic queries. Dalton, who was denied bail, could face life in prison without parole if convicted. Michigan does not have the death penalty.

## The crimes

Police say Dalton, while moonlighting as an Uber driver, randomly shot victims at three locations in between fares. The attacks started at about 6 p.m. when police say Dalton shot a woman four times at an apartment complex parking lot. The victim was hospitalized in serious condition.

After four hours of quiet, the spree apparently turned deadly. Police say Dalton shot and killed a father and son sitting in their cars at a Kia car dealership at about 10 p.m. And 15 minutes later, police say he killed four people and critically wounded a 14-year-old girl in a [Cracker Barrel](#) parking lot.

Dalton was arrested without incident at about 12:45 a.m. Sunday after a [Kalamazoo County](#) sheriff's deputy spotted a car matching the description of Dalton's vehicle leaving a bar parking lot. A semiautomatic handgun was found in the car, police said.

## The suspect

Kalamazoo Prosecutor Jeff Getting said Dalton has no prior criminal record, and Uber said he passed a background check. Dalton lives in a small ranch home in Kalamazoo County with his wife, Carole, and two children. His daytime job was insurance adjuster, and neighbors say he enjoyed tinkering with cars and owned a few of them.



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[Police: 6 dead in 'random' Michigan shootings; suspect held](#)

(<http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation-now/2016/02/21/reports-gunman-kills-least-6-michigan/80694468/>)



USA TODAY

[Kalamazoo mourns shooting victims at vigil](#)

(<http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation-now/2016/02/22/kalamazoo-shooting-vigil/80724704/>)

Carole Dalton works for the investment firm Raymond James and earned an administrative assistant certificate from [Kalamazoo Valley Community College](#).

"He was a nice guy," neighbor Sally Pardo, 70, told the [Detroit Free Press](#) (</story/news/local/michigan/2016/02/21/neighbors-kalamazoo-suspect-good-family-man-liked-guns/80702198/>). "He had two kids, a wife. That's what's really sad. Those kids have to live with this for the rest of their lives. What's even sadder is the victims and their families. ... It just breaks my heart."

Getting said Dalton appeared even-tempered during his arrest and subsequent questioning.

"He did not present in a combative way or an emotional way at all," Getting said.

## The victims

The fatalities at the car dealership were high school senior Tyler Smith, 17, and his father, Richard, 53, Mattawan Consolidated Schools superintendent Robin Buckler confirmed.

"Our thoughts and prayers go out to Tyler and his family, friends and the community," Buchler said in a statement.

The Cracker Barrel fatalities were Mary Lou Nye, 62, of Baroda, Mich., and Battle Creek residents [Mary Jo Nye](#), 60, Dorothy Brown, 74, and Barbara Hawthorne, 68.

Mary Lou Nye was the driver of an [Oldsmobile](#) minivan targeted in the restaurant's lot. Neighbor Carol Dinges said Nye was a retired office manager who stayed positive even while rebuilding a house heavily damaged by a tornado.

Mary Jo Nye was the driver of a [Chevrolet Cruze](#). Nye was a retired teacher who played a role in the founding of an alternative high school in Battle Creek and taught English there before retiring four years ago. Tara Egnatuk, an assistant director at the school, told the [Battle Creek Enquirer](#) she believed Mary Lou and Mary Jo Nye were sisters-in-law.

Brown, the mother of two grown sons, was a passenger in the Chevrolet Cruze. "A sweet, sweet old lady," Daniel Arnold, Brown's next-door neighbor for the last three years, told [mlive.com](#) ([http://www.mlive.com/news/kalamazoo/index.ssf/2016/02/kalamazoo\\_mass\\_shooting\\_victim.html](http://www.mlive.com/news/kalamazoo/index.ssf/2016/02/kalamazoo_mass_shooting_victim.html)). "You couldn't ask for a better neighbor."

Hawthorne, also in the Cruze, worked at [Kellogg Co.](#) for 22 years before retiring in 2008, Kellogg CEO [John Bryant](#) said.

"We are deeply saddened by these tragic events and brokenhearted to learn that one of the victims, Barbara Hawthorne, belonged to our Kellogg family," Bryant said in a statement. "Our thoughts and prayers are with Barbara's family and friends, as well as all of the victims of this crime and their families."

## **Uber**

Uber customer Matt Mellen told [WWMT-TV](#) (<http://wwmt.com/news/local/uber-customers-share-experiences-in-shooting-suspects-vehicle-on-night-of-rampage>) in Kalamazoo that he got a ride from Dalton less than two hours before the shooting spree began. He said Dalton showed up in a Chevy Equinox with his dog in the back at about 4:30 p.m. Saturday. Mellen told the station Dalton began driving erratically after receiving a phone call.

"We were driving through medians, driving through the lawn, speeding along and when we came to a stop, I jumped out of the car and ran away," Mellen told the station. He said he called police and Uber.

Uber issued a statement saying the company was cooperating with police.

"We are horrified and heartbroken at the senseless violence in [Kalamazoo, Michigan](#)," Joe Sullivan, chief security officer at Uber, said in the statement. "Our hearts and prayers are with the families of the victims of this devastating crime and those recovering from injuries. We have reached out to the police to help with their investigation in any way that we can."

## **[President Obama weighs in](#)**

President Obama, speaking at a meeting of U.S. governors in Washington, said he had called the mayor and police chief in Kalamazoo and pledged federal support. He said first responders had done an "outstanding job."

Still, he added, "We have got families that are shattered today."

*Contributing: Jennifer Bowman, Battle Creek Enquirer*

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