
Introduction

Nothing can defeat the heart of this city. Nothing. Nothing will take us down because we take care of one another.
— from my remarks at the interfaith service held at the Cathedral of the Holy Cross in Boston after the Marathon bombing

"Mayor, we've just had a major explosion at the Marathon!" my security aide, Sergeant Mike Cunniff, shouted from the doorway of my hospital room. "Not one, but two." I flicked on my TV and saw wild footage of racers staggering out of a storm of debris and police running into it. While I watched in horror, an announcer said that an incendiary device had just been detonated at the JFK Library in Dorchester. The news crawl reported that police had found "multiple explosive devices in Boston." Dear God, I thought, how big would this get? If two bombs (or three), why not ten? If on Boylston Street, why not elsewhere — why not anywhere? If these wounded spectators, the ones who must be sprawled on the sidewalk under the white cloud, why not others lining the route five deep for miles? As the smoke cleared, I caught sight of a Marathon banner on a lamppost with my signature beneath the slogan THIS IS YOUR MOMENT.

The first bomb went off at the finish line across the street from a small grandstand. If I hadn't broken my leg, I would have been sitting there cheering a runner from my staff who crossed the finish
line minutes ahead of the blast. With my grandkids. In the front row.
A district fire chief, I later learned, sent the bomb squad to search
for a possible third unexploded bomb planted under the grandstand.
As the first bomb exploded in an endless loop on television,
something else came back to me, something my son Tommy, a po-
lice detective, had told me in passing. He'd be on Boylston, he said,
near the finish line.
A press conference was scheduled for five o'clock at the Westin
Hotel. My nurses at Brigham and Women's Hospital had less than
two hours to fit me with a walking cast and a catheter. I called Gov-
ernor Deval Patrick and said if I wasn't there, to start without me.
Delay was our enemy. Either public officials would fill the informa-
tion hole or rumor would.
My doctor advised me to stay put. It was important to keep the
leg elevated. (I had a history of blood clots.) It was vital not to put
weight on my foot. On Saturday a steel plate had been screwed into
my right ankle. This was Monday. Too soon to move, too risky . . .
"I don't care what you say, doc, I'm going," I said. My city had
been attacked. I had to be out there.
Dot Joyce, my press secretary, reported that casualties were ar-
iving at the front entrance of the Brigham, and reporters were col-
lecting in the lobby. I couldn't leave that way. Not unless I wanted
microphones thrust in my face with victims being stretchered into
the ER behind me.
Waiting in the hallway while I dressed, Dot and Mike saw some-
thing out the window that took their breath away. Sixteen stories
below, police were surrounding a car stopped in the middle of the
street. Mike got on his cell. Someone had abandoned the car. Inside
was a suspicious package. It was being checked out. Mike would be
told when it was safe for me to leave.

Introduction

That was the atmosphere in Boston. Fear was spreading.
We took the freight elevator to the loading dock at the back of
the hospital. Mike and Dot loaded me and my wheelchair into my
SUV. Mike pulled out onto Francis Street. As we passed the front of
the hospital, TV reporters began frantically gesturing to their cam-
eramen to get a shot of the departing mayor. Mike turned left on
Huntington Ave, heading downtown toward the Westin.
The police scanner crackled. The superintendent was redeploy-
ing his forces from the Marathon route to historic sites like Faneuil
Hall, to the train stations, to the hospitals. Mike flicked on the blue
lights. When the traffic knotted, he tapped the siren.
Dot had drafted some remarks for me to deliver. We discussed
points to hit. Boston was strong, its people resilient. We would get
through this if we stuck together . . . Half-heard words on the radio
distracted us. We resumed talking for a few minutes, then the siren
went off. The sound was hell on the nerves.
The sunny April day had been warm enough to draw tens of
thousands outdoors to watch the race but cool enough so the 23,000
runners did not risk dehydration. The first part of the drive down
Huntington, it still looked like the same day outside — Boston Be-
fore. We came up on the other side of the short tunnel beneath Mass
Ave in Boston After. Lower Huntington had been turned into a stag-
ing area for state and city SWAT teams. Gray military-style vehicles
lined the street. Black-clad officers were everywhere, automatic ri-
fles slung over their shoulders, muzzles pointing down. It was like
entering a war zone. But where was the front? And who was the en-
emy?
If government didn't act calmly and confidently, I was afraid the
solidarity seen by millions after the bombing might fray. Episodes
of vigilante violence against strangers had marred the aftermath of
Introduction

9/11. That must not happen in a Boston teeming with "strangers"—Marathon competitors and fans from everywhere.

I wanted the focus to be on the heroism of the first responders, on the resourcefulness of the nurses who saved lives in medical tents equipped to treat blisters, and on the decency of race watchers who took stranded runners into their homes. Instead of telling that story, I worried that the media would continue to highlight the mayhem and the manhunt. Leaving my room I had heard a TV talking head say, "State and city authorities are treating Boston as a city under attack."

So when security people at the Westin meeting urged the governor to declare a state of emergency, I said that was exactly the wrong thing to do. We needed to reassure citizens that we were taking the right steps to safeguard the city. Not scare the hell out of them. Governor Patrick agreed.

At the press conference, I made my points about the strength and resilience of Boston's people. Within hours Emerson College students had created the hashtag #BostonStrong, and the legend was appearing on T-shirts selling online.

In photographs of the event my head is bowed, as if, in my first quiet moment since the bombs went off, the blow to the city was hitting me for the first time. I remember feeling grief for the dead and injured, and rage at the terrorists who splattered blood on the century-old Boston Marathon. And I was frustrated that at Boston's worst moment I couldn't be at my best.

At a second press conference on Monday evening, I said Boston would be open for business on Tuesday morning: "People returning to work tomorrow will notice an increased police presence in the city. They should not be alarmed." Only the area around Copley Square—"the largest crime scene in Boston's history"—would be closed off.

Leaving the Westin, I asked Mike to drive to the finish line. We got close enough to see FBI and ATF agents picking over the shrapnel, nails, ball bearings, backpacks, duffel bags, and cell phones littering Boylston Street. I didn't realize it then, but the body of eight-year-old Martin Richard still lay on the sidewalk. The police commissioner, Ed Davis, called with that news. He said family members were anxious to remove Martin, but the FBI didn't want the crime scene disturbed. Jesus, I said, can't you hurry them up? "I'll try," he said.

Martin was from Dorchester. I knew his family. I didn't know that his mother, Denise, had been struck in the eye by a ball bearing. Or that his seven-year-old sister, Jane, had lost her left leg.

Martin was one of three spectators near the finish line killed by the blast, the cable channels reported that night. Over two hundred and fifty were wounded. EMTs, police, and firefighters carried them to ambulances, squad cars, and fire trucks, which rushed them to nine hospitals. Many were in critical condition; some had lost limbs, and a few more than one.

Tommy spent Monday afternoon and evening at the Brigham, panning for clues that might lead to the bombers by gently questioning their horribly wounded victims. Senator Elizabeth Warren and I were scheduled to visit some of them on Tuesday. Tommy came upstairs to brace me. "No one should ever see what I saw today," he said.

Elizabeth and I saw young women who seemed to get younger as we went from room to room past grieving loved ones in the hall. Please, I said to the nurses, ask if it's OK for us to come in.

I wanted to apologize for what had happened to them in my city. But stricken people don't want mea culpas. They want help. You learn that talking to parents of murdered kids. Concentrate on your recovery and don't worry about anything else, I said. Caring people
Introduction

from all over the world are contributing to a fund to help you get on
with your life as rapidly as possible.

We met one woman who chatted and smiled as if losing a leg was
no big deal. She was, we realized, trying to cheer us up.

On Monday night, alone in my room, it came to me: We had to do
something for these people. We needed one fund — not five or six —
so the money would get out the door quickly. From experience I
knew how easily money could get stuck in institutional pipelines
dedicated to other uses. To emphasize that it was the only game in
town, we called it One Fund Boston. My chief of staff, Mitch Weiss,
who’d started up a nonprofit, took the reins with help from the team
at City Hall. By five o’clock that afternoon, thanks to Mike Sheehan,
the CEO of Hill Holliday, the Boston advertising agency, the One
Fund had a logo and was accepting donations through a website.

While we were making these arrangements, I took a phone call
from Jim Gallagher, the executive vice president of John Hancock,
the chief sponsor of the Boston Marathon, whose tower looms over
the finish line and whose employees working the race did yeoman
service after the bombing. Jim wanted to know what name to write
on Hancock’s check for $1 million. I was flabbergasted. I knew how
competitive generosity worked. Hancock had set a high bar for the
city’s other corporate citizens. They — New Balance, State Street
Bank & Trust, Bain Capital, the Red Sox, others — promptly hurdled
it. Our initial goal was to raise $10 million. The One Fund collected
$7.5 million in the first twenty-four hours, and not just from busi-
nesses but from nearly ten thousand individuals.

By the close of business on day one, the One Fund had recruited
a proven administrator, Ken Feinberg, the former aide to Senator
Ted Kennedy, who managed the biggest 9/11 survivors’ fund. I called
him in New York from my bed.

With contributions from the ninety-two countries that sent run-
ners to the Marathon and from all fifty states, the One Fund raised
$61 million between April 16 and July 1 and gave all of it to victims
of the bombing. Another $13 million poured in by the end of the
year. Contributions ranged from Hancock’s million to the $38 in
cash raised at a lemonade stand by Kristine and Gwen, who didn’t
give their address.

The biggest cash gift received by the One Fund was completely
anonymous. During the first post-bombing game at Fenway Park,
the Red Sox passed the hat among the fans. I stopped by the club-
house to see the $43,000 haul. A Red Sox executive started to hand
me a big bag of money. “No, no, I can’t touch that,” I protested, pic-
turing the caption under the photograph. Nodding toward David
Ortiz, the Red Sox slugger and team character, I said, “Give it to
David.” Discretion is not Big Papi’s game. He swung the bag around
his head to heighten the drama. Oh no, I yelled, just as he poured the
bills and coins onto the floor.

Every one of the 200,000 contributions was precious to us. They
showed love for our little city. They showed compassion for the 267
strangers standing nearest to the nail-spooling bombs. They wove
goodness into the memory of the Marathon bombing.

But there was a problem, and only the White House could
solve it.

The One Fund was too unconventional for the IRS. We had ap-
piled for 501(c)(3) status under the tax law so contributors could
claim a deduction. The IRS would permit that — if the beneficia-
ties, the shattered victims filling Boston’s hospitals, demonstrated
their “need” by producing hospital bills, tax returns, and the like.
We countered that the One Fund was distributing gifts, not paying
patients’ bills. Donors contributed to the fund without conditions,
and the fund would give out money without conditions. If it went
to pay hospital bills, fine. If it was used to take the kids to Disney World, also fine. The law, the IRS lawyers said, was the law.

President Obama and Vice President Biden called several times to say if there was anything they could do to help Boston. Just ask. I asked. If the IRS denied deductions to One Fund donors, I explained to Joe Biden, that would discourage giving and limit the payout to people who had lost eyes, legs, and children. The IRS, I added, had enough trouble with the Republicans attacking it for investigating conservative groups. It would be a shame if someone leaked the news that IRS bureaucrats were blocking help to the victims of the deadliest terrorist bombing since 9/11 . . .

The problem went away. The One Fund made new tax law.

But that was not clear yet a week after the bombing when I met with big donors and told them they might not be able to write off their contributions. Not one executive blinked. I expected no less from the Boston business community, which in my twenty years in office never let the city down.

Cooperation among the different tiers of government — city, state, federal — was unprecedented. The White House responded in minutes on all our requests. And Governor Patrick and I agreed in minutes on who should do what, and backed each other up in public statements. The tone we set was communicated down the chain of command, where city cops and state troopers shared information and worked in tandem on the criminal investigation.

"From the very beginning, the senior people on the scene or arriving at the scene felt the need to find one another," according to a Harvard study of emergency management after the bombing. "They realized that the situation needed them to come together." On the day of the bombing, that saved lives. ("Every person who left the scene alive is alive today.") The teamwork was rehearsed. Years before 9/11, I sent my department heads to Virginia for briefings on emergency preparedness. Since 9/11 we had drilled, exercised, played out in real time how to respond to attacks on big public events like the Democratic Convention in 2004 and the annual July Fourth celebration on the Esplanade. "Boston Strong was not a chance result," the Harvard researchers concluded. "It was, instead, the product of years of investment of time and hard work by people across multiple jurisdictions, levels of government, agencies and organizations."

About the FBI, the lead agency in the hunt for the bombers, my feelings are mixed. On the one hand, the agents were committed to getting the bad guys. On the other, the bureau’s caution seemed motivated by fear of making a mistake.

By late Wednesday, Ed Davis and I were losing patience. Security cameras at stores along Boylston Street, including Lord & Taylor across from the second bomb blast, had recorded the bombers’ images, but the bureau was resisting pressure to release the pictures. The feds did not want the suspects to know they had been caught on tape. Apparently, some agents thought the two young men (it was not yet known they were brothers) might show up around the Cathedral of the Holy Cross on Thursday morning, drawn by President Obama, who’d be speaking at an interfaith service. I hoped that risky plan wasn’t the only reason the FBI was reluctant to share the tapes with the earth’s population.

Like Ed Davis, I was disturbed to discover that, long before the bombing, the FBI had not shared with state and local police its intel about Tamerlan Tsarnaev’s mysterious 2012 trip to Dagestan, a Russian republic. According to a 2014 report by the House Committee on Homeland Security, "even in the days after the attack as the
manhunt was ongoing," the FBI did not inform Davis of its Tsarnaev investigation. The FBI and the CIA had hoarded information that, if shared, might have prevented 9/11. The Homeland Security Committee report identified four "systemic weaknesses" in federal counterterrorism efforts prior to the bombing. The first weakness—"insufficient cooperation and information sharing between Federal agencies and local law enforcement"—suggests that 9/11 had not been enough to shake up the FBI's insular culture.*

I decided to notch up the pressure to release the videos. In an interview with CNN's John King, a Dorchester boy, I surfaced the Lord & Taylor intelligence. So that cat was out of the bag. Reddit was displaying an image said to be taken from a security camera that fit the bomber's rumored description—white baseball cap, dark backpack. Only it wasn't the bomber but a young man who worked in my office! The FBI warned the media of the "unintended consequences" of running such images.

Lynching was one of them. The cover of Thursday's New York Post raised that danger. Under the headline "Bag Men" and flanked by the line "Feds Seek These Two Pictured at Boston Marathon" was a photograph of two innocent Massachusetts men, sixteen-year-old Salaheddin Barhoum and twenty-four-year-old Yassine Zaimi, seen talking near the finish line. The Post cover story put their lives at risk. Before the worst happened, the FBI had to release the video of the real bombers. I silently vowed to appeal to the president if the bureau didn't budge.

On Thursday afternoon, it budge.

That morning, passing bomb-sniffing dogs patrolling the streets, I arrived at the cathedral before the president. Sitting alone in a basement room, I had time to think. I sensed the public mood falling. Alarmed that the bombers were still at large, people were losing confidence in the investigation. They were also shaken (I know I was) by graphic media accounts of amputations. I wanted to do something—anything—to raise morale, even if only for a news cycle. But what?

I don't obsess about comments in the media. Usually. But a statement to a reporter from a local professor had stuck in my craw. Referring to my retirement at the end of 2013, he said, "It is unfortunate that one of the last impressions people will have of his mayoralty is him in a wheelchair, almost sidelined at a time of crisis." The phrase "in a wheelchair" got to me. Hadn't FDR led the country through depression and war in a wheelchair?

At the interfaith service a succession of speakers mounted the pulpit to address the audience. A separate microphone, adjusted to the height of my wheelchair, was set up for me. When it was my turn to speak, my son whispered to me, "Dad, I'll wheel you over to the microphone." Suddenly, I knew what to do. "Tommy," I said, "I'm the mayor. Wheel me to the pulpit. I'm going to stand up."

If you watched the service, you saw the struggle I had doing it. I could feel the president and Mrs. Obama and the two thousand people in the cathedral rooting for me. With Tommy tipping the wheelchair forward, I put my hands on the arms and pushed. It was no good. I tucked my elbows further back and pushed harder. Bit-
It quoted one young woman visiting the makeshift Copley Square memorial to the bombing victims, and, boy, did she get my message! "He can't even walk and he's here to comfort all of us," she said. "It shows how strong our leaders are here — how strong the people are — that if anything were to happen . . . we'd drop whatever we're doing and . . . take care of each other." People still tell me that speech lifted their spirits.

On Friday morning I reversed the stand I had staked out on Monday afternoon: Terror must not be allowed to disrupt daily life. Boston had nothing to fear.

Boston had plenty to fear that Friday morning. The release of the store security videos panicked the bombers, the Tsarnaev brothers, into running. They didn't get far, about a mile from their Cambridge home, when they stopped to ambush a twenty-six-year-old MIT policeman, Sean A. Collier. In a bungled attempt to steal his gun, they snuck up behind his patrol car and shot him five times. Crossing the Charles River into Boston, they carjacked a Mercedes SUV in Allston. The older brother, Tamerlan, waved a silver pistol at the driver and said, "I just killed a policeman in Cambridge." And for nearly ninety minutes, the brothers made him, a young Chinese immigrant-entrepreneur named Danny, drive from one ATM to another emptying his bank account. When they stopped for gas back on the Cambridge side of the Charles, Danny bolted and alerted police.

In the SUV, the brothers led cruisers on a chase that ended in the early hours of Friday in Watertown, near the Boston line, in a shootout that left one officer, Richard H. Donohue Jr., critically wounded. Tamerlan was killed. Dzhokhar, the younger brother, escaped. After searching for him till dawn, police thought he might have got away.
Introduction

He was a dangerous kid. In the Watertown gunfight, the brothers threw pipe bombs at police.

Dzhokhar Tsarnaev wasn’t all Boston had to fear that morning. There were reports of a man carrying a suspicious package near the federal courthouse in the Seaport District, of another suspicious package in a cab at Charlestown, of pipe bombs buried in Kenmore Square, of a dangerous character on an Amtrak train... Governor Patrick ticked them off in a six A.M. call. Monday’s question was Friday’s: How big could this get?

The security people recommended a lockdown of Boston and municipalities bordering it. Not a state of emergency, Patrick said. A million people would be asked, not ordered, to “shelter-in-place.”

On Monday I vowed, “We will not let terror take us over.” The reports streaming in on Friday morning—earlier in the week we had refused to be panicked by such rumors. I doubted the brothers had confederates. I still believed they acted alone.

Danny, the owner of the carjacked SUV, said they discussed driving to New York to bomb Times Square. Suppose Dzhokhar was still in Watertown. Only one measure could prevent him from seizing another car and carrying out their plan: stopping all travel so any moving civilian vehicle would stand out. That was my reason for going along with shelter-in-place.

“Do it,” I said.

“There is a massive manhunt under way,” the governor announced at a press conference. “To assist that... we’re asking people to shelter-in-place, in other words to stay indoors with the doors locked and do not open the doors to anyone other than a properly identified law enforcement officer, and that applies here in Watertown where we are right now, [but] also in Cambridge... and at this point, all of Boston. All of Boston.”

Without detailing them, Police Commissioner Ed Davis, speaking next, emphasized the reports that justified the lockdown: “Within the last half hour we have received information that I have communicated to Mayor Menino... Mayor Menino asked me to come here and to tell you... that the shelter-in-place recommendation has been extended throughout the City of Boston.”

Shelter-in-place was an overreaction. That was clear Friday evening, when, minutes after the governor called it off, Dzhokhar Tsarnaev was found. After being confined to his house all day, David Henneberry, who lived on Franklin Street in Watertown, less than a mile from where Tsarnaev ditched the SUV, went outside to get some fresh air. He noticed two paint rollers on his lawn. He figured they had fallen from the cover on his boat. When he’d wrapped the Slip Away II in white plastic in the fall, he’d put paint rollers under the bottom edge of the wrap to protect the surface of the boat. He climbed a stepladder, peeled back the cover, and looked inside.

Minutes later an officer’s voice came over the police scanner: “We’re getting a report from Watertown of 67 Franklin Street. They have a boat with blood in it... I’ve got the owner of the house here. He says there’s a body in the boat.” Absent shelter-in-place, Henneberry might have discovered Dzhokhar Tsarnaev earlier.

I was in Watertown with my team in the city SUV when Commissioner Davis walked over, leaned his head into the vehicle, and said, “We got him.” Dot Joyce’s tweet—“We got him, we got him. Thank God, the search is over”—was the first the world heard of it.

The scanner came alive with chatter. I picked up a microphone. To the hundreds of officers who had worked around the clock for five days to bring the bombers to justice, I said: “People of Boston are proud of you. Especially the mayor of Boston. I’m very proud of
what you've done." Silence. Then the scanner crackled and a voice said something I won't forget: "We did it for you, boss."

That night thousands poured into the streets to cheer convoys of police vehicles. When I returned to the Parkman House, the city-owned townhouse on Beacon Hill where I was staying since leaving the hospital, a crowd of young people were celebrating on the Common. I rolled down the window. They were singing "God Bless America."

Ed Davis called. "The kids are celebrating in the Fenway," he said. Should the police begin to shut it down? "Let 'em blow off steam," I said. "They've been sheltered-in-place for twelve hours. They deserve to whoop it up."

Governor Patrick and I were both retiring at the end of our terms. Our timing was perfect. If we had run for reelection, the lockdown would have been used against us. Attack ads would have depicted Boston as a scene from Planet of the Apes: the "eerily empty" downtown streets, the traffic-less highways, the shuttered train yards, the closed businesses, universities, and courthouses, the locked City Hall and State House. The ads would contrast what I said all week with what I said to George Stephanopoulos on ABC's This Week two days after Dzhokhar's capture:

**ME:** These terrorists want[ed] to ... hold the city hostage and stop the economy. . . . Look at what happened on Friday. The whole city was on lockdown, no businesses open, nobody leaving their homes. . . .

**GEORGE:** Well, let me ask you about that lockdown. Because some have suggested that it was an overt reaction to lock down the city — that it was actually giving the terrorists exactly what they wanted.

George spoke my Monday lines to indict my Friday decision. Yet if shelter-in-place was a miscalculation by elected officials, it was a triumph for citizens. "We asked," Governor Patrick said a year after the bombing. "Frankly, it was an amazing thing . . . that people . . . complied."

Not everyone saw it that way. "The Boston bombing provided the opportunity for the government to turn what should have been a police investigation into a military-style occupation of an American city," Ron Paul argued. A military-style occupation? "There has been no law mentioned," a police official said, "or any idea that if you go outside [you'll] be arrested." People stayed home voluntarily.

Paul again: "This unprecedented act should frighten us as much or more than the attack itself." Really? Should it "frighten us" that to contain a common threat, citizens did what their government requested? That by depriving terrorists of the option of hiding in the crowd, they took responsibility for public safety? That Bostonians consented to limit their individual freedom in order to preserve their civic liberty? This unprecedented act should make us curious why, for thirteen hours on a fine April day, 650,000 Boston residents put community before self, and how their city came to inspire their loyalty. Trust in government is at an all-time low. Perhaps the Boston story holds lessons on how to regain it.

After five terms as mayor, I left office with an 80 percent approval rating. That is not a tribute to me but to a style of governing that bridges the gap between the citizen and the city. I paid attention to the fundamentals of urban life — clean streets, public safety, good schools, neighborhood commerce. I listened to what people said they wanted from government. Call my City Hall and you never got an answering machine. People trusted government because it heard them. Because they could talk to it. Because it kept its word. And
because it was credible about things people could see, they accepted its judgment on important things they couldn’t. In an “amazing” show of self-government, all of Boston acted as one on April 19, 2013. This book tries to explain why, as I told George Stephanopoulos, “Boston did a great job that day.”