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Cheers and jubilation follow apprehension of second suspect

By Zachary T. Sampson and Jaclyn Reiss | GLOBE CORRESPONDENTS APRIL 20, 2013

 ARTICLE

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Cheering “Boston Strong” and “USA,” hundreds of jubilant Bostonians gathered on the Common and around the city on Friday night to celebrate the capture of the last Boston Marathon bombing suspect and the first sense of relief in the region in nearly a week.

“In a way it feels like we’ve been in this siege mentality, and it just feels like it’s been lifted,” said Ricky Pickering, 25, of Back Bay, after thousands of people in Boston, Watertown, and other communities were told to stay in their homes on Friday while the manhunt for Dzhokhar Tsarnaev went on.

Most of the crowd, which included many college students, lined up to shake hands and high-five Boston police officers on duty on the Common. Proud cries of “B-P-D” were a show of gratitude for the law enforcement men and women who guarded the city this week.

Zach Tucker, a 20-year-old Emerson College student, said the appreciation for police was particularly special.

“Sometimes college students have a somewhat contentious relationship with police, and you see none of that tonight,” he said.

But not all revelers were students. Myron Miller, 67, of the Back Bay, said he heard the celebration from nearby Commonwealth Avenue. He walked over to see people hanging off the rotunda in the middle of the Common, shouting and waving American flags. Drivers in passing cars honked horns in approval.

“It sounded exuberant so I decided to join,” Miller said.

He said the celebration was a much-needed release after a week of anguish, since the bombings at the Boston Marathon killed three people on Monday.

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“They’re proud of the city being so resilient, they’re proud of the police and the FBI doing a damn good job catching a suspect as they should, and I just think it’s a good place to be,” Miller said.

David Belluck brought his 12-year-old daughter, Zoe, and 10-year-old son, Aaron, from Back Bay to witness the festivities in the heart of the city.

“This kind of spontaneous outburst of pride in the city and unity, it’s just unprecedented,” said Belluck, a 25-year Boston resident.

Zoe beamed by his side, absorbing the joy. “Unforgettable. It’s amazing to be out here and just feeling the same way as everyone else does,” she said. “I don’t know, I’m just so happy.”

In Watertown, where Tsarnaev was captured Friday night, the arrest triggered an outpouring of seemingly pent-up emotions among residents who took to cheering and clapping as the long blue line of police and state troopers left the town.

At 10:30 p.m. in Watertown Square, a crowd of some 40 people waved American flags and chanted “USA! USA! USA!” The celebrants exchanged mutual salutes with drivers who blew their horns as they rode past and spontaneously sang, “God Bless America.”

The crowd grew especially rowdy when a long line of State Police cruisers rolled past. “Way to go, boys!” one man yelled at the caravan.

Throughout the city, impromptu celebrations sprang up, beginning with the group of some 100 people who listened to accounts on a radio as police closed in, and finally captured him on Franklin Street. Police found Tsarnaev covered with his own blood in a boat underneath a tarp.

“They got him, he’s in custody,” an unidentified state trooper told a cluster of reporters.

SWAT teams used the back porch of Emmanuel Der Torossian’s house as a perch to see into the yard where Tsarnaev had been found hiding in the boat parked in his neighbor’s backyard. “I’m happy it didn’t end with bloodshed because information is more valuable for the safety of the country,” he said.

Shane Windstorm, who lives in Watertown, said he was also happy the suspect was caught without further blood being spilled. “Enough people have already died,” he said.

The capture, he said, “doesn’t give me complete closure, but it gives me hope.”

Not everything was cheers and wild applause Friday night, however. Blocks away from the Common, dozens of people gathered at the makeshift memorial to the bombing victims at Boylston and Berkeley

streets. It was a largely silent site, with heavy tears instead of screams of joy.

Mark Hayes, 50, of Chinatown, said he had not slept in 24 hours because he followed news of the manhunt nonstop. A former transit police officer, he said visiting the memorial was an important part of the grieving process.

“I said, ‘I got to get down there and be out there among my friends, friends I know and friends I don’t know,’” Hayes said, praising Boston residents for their show of unity.

Shortly before midnight, a bagpiper walked down Berkeley Street, the strains of “Amazing Grace” breaking the silence around the memorial. The mourners gathered around him, and their voices rose halfway through the song.

Suffolk University students Flora Wilds, 19, and Taylor Chacon, 20, also had visited the more jubilant Common, but said it was important to remember the tragic toll of the bombings. “We have to recognize the fact that a lot of people were injured, people were lost too,” Wilds said while standing near the memorial.

Matt Carroll, Brian Ballou, Scott Helman, and Akilah Johnson and Globe Correspondents Matt Rocheleau and Evan Allen contributed to this report. Zachary T. Sampson can be reached at zachary.sampson@globe.com and Jaclyn Reiss can be reached at jaclyn.reiss@globe.com.

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