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Residents cheer capture of Marathon bombing suspect

By **Jaclyn Reiss, Matt Rocheleau, Evan Allen, Matt Carroll, Brian Ballou, Scott Helman and Akilah Johnson.** | GLOBE CORRESPONDENTS AND GLOBE STAFF APRIL 20, 2013

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Bystanders cheered at the scene after it was announced the suspect had been captured.

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WATERTOWN — The capture of Dzhokhar A. Tsarnaev triggered an outpouring of seemingly pent-up emotions among residents here who took to cheering, applauding and clapping as the long blue line of police and troopers left the city authorities had shut down as they hunted Tsarnaev.

At 10:30 p.m. in Watertown Square, a crowd of some 40 people waved American flags as they 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 a caravan of police.

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, triggering a different round of applause.

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’s happy the suspect was caught without further blood spilled, a reference to the reasons Tsarnaev was being pursued by police - the two bombs he and his brother allegedly set off at the Boston Marathon on Monday, killing three people and wounded more than 170.

“Enough people have already died,” he said.

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

Maryalice Montoya has had a difficult two days. On Thursday night, she was in front of the 7-11 convenience store that police initially believed had been robbed by Tsarnaev and his brother, Tamerlan.

And later, she was trapped for nearly three hours on Mount Auburn Street in her stilettos early Friday during the firefight between the brothers and police, a battle that saw them use handmade hand grenades, improved explosive devices and some 200 rounds of ammunition.

And then the hunt ends on her street, right near where she lives. When she heard the gunfire Friday night that marked the end of Tsarnaev’s time on the run, Montoya jumped in her bathtub with a bottle of wine, learning what was happening via texts from friends

“I saw everything from beginning to end,” she said. “It’s just so surreal. ”

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A veteran of the Navy, she insists she knows guns and ordnance and says there was definitely an explosion Friday night during the capture.

When Tsarnaev was taken away in an ambulance, Montoya blasted “Dirty Water” out her windows for the police.

“They said it was so cool, like, ‘you guys are already partying!’ ”

The news of the capture was greeted with raucous applause by several hundred people gathered on Mount Auburn Street to watch the riveting drama unfold.

People who had been waiting in tense silence only a few minutes before, embraced each other as they circled a car and heard the news of the arrest on a radio. The scene seemed reminiscent of the news of a World War II era victory.

“You can knock us back but you can’t keep us down,” said Nick Montanaro, 18, of Franklin. “This is great.”

As he spoke, police officers just inside the crime scene line turned to each other, hugged, and shook each others’ hands with wide smiles. Behind them, a stream of dozens of police and armored vehicles left the area where the suspect had been caught and paraded through a narrow canyon of cheering onlookers.

“We did it! We did it!” one woman yelled. “Awesome. Amazing,” said another, reflecting a collective joy among people who had been confined to their homes for the day.

The police turned and acknowledged the reception with wide grins and thumbs up extended through the open windows. They blared horns, they played their sirens, and one officer used his loudspeaker to proclaim, “God bless America.”

Church bells began to peal.

“I’m glad it’s over and he’s alive,” said Jessica Rufo, 35, of Newton, as she held aloft a smartphone to record the scene. “We need to know why it happened and if any more people are involved, to see why someone who seemed so bright could have changed so much.”

When the shelter-in home order was called off around 6 p.m. Friday, Tony Buscher was thrilled - he had been cooped up all day and wanted some fresh air. He was talking to his neighbor down the street when police officers came running by and one shouted at him to get inside.

“As soon as I closed my door it was just ‘pop-pop-pop-pop-pop,’ ” he said, imitating machine gun fire. “When they descended on that scene, it was fast, it was furious.”

He said he ran upstairs to look out the window, and saw officers running through backyards. He said the area is quiet with a lot of good places to hide, and he’d had a “creepy feeling” about it all day.

He said he heard more rounds about an hour later. He went out to his driveway where he could hear scanner chatter from a police car parked nearby, and on the scanner he heard “there’s movement in the boat.”

“Then we were all just waiting,” he said.

Shortly afterward he heard it was over.

“It was a relief,” Buscher said. “I just didn’t know how it would end. I was thinking, he’s got a bomb, how big is it gonna be?”

Marina Leao, 15, a student at Watertown Middle School lives right off Irving street and had come to watch the action on Arsenal Street.

“We’re astonished that it happened right near home,” she said, adding she is “so relieved, especially because we’ve been stuck in our house all day.”

Following the order by Governor Deval Patrick to shelter at home, Leao said she spent the day watching television news accounts of the exhaustive search by heavily armed police officers. But her connection to the violent pursuit of the marathon bombing suspects began Thursday night when a massive firefight broke out between police and the Tsarnaev brothers.

Leao never went back to sleep. Tomorrow, she plans to hit the new Froyo store on Mount Auburn Street.

It’s been a sad week, she said, but a seemingly good end Friday night.

“It’s bad, but it’s good that it’s all over and taken care of.”

While Watertown residents cheered news of the arrests, in the Cambridge neighborhood where the two brothers lived, there was far less emotion.

Inside Martin Bro. Liquors, on the corner of Cambridge and Norfolk where the Tsarnaevs lived, customers

gathered to watch a wall-mounted TV as authorities announced the arrest. Even as they watched, the curious buyers questioned the clerk.

“Did you ever see him around?” one guy asked.

The clerk Raz Scherchen nodded, but said only when the kid was young.

“He just came in to get the milk and candy,” he said. “On mornings, Fridays and Saturdays.”

Outside, passersby posed in front of the TV cameras and cops, others speculated on how Tsarnaev would fare now.

Jeremy Ouellette stood outside his Watertown home near Franklin Street, where the terror suspect was captured wearing his blue and gold Boston marathon jacket.

“This is like a nightmare following me for a week,” he said.

Ouellette, 29, had just finished the Boston Marathon about 30 minutes before the bombs exploded on Monday. His family members there to cheer him on escaped unscathed.

Still, he spent a nerve-wracking hour looking for them. Today, he spent about a dozen hours worried about the location of the bombing suspect.

“I’m very happy that they were able to resolve this within the week,” he said. “ Now, we can all go on to mend.”

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