

Al told me I had to write a report

What should have been a delightful, happy day was not. The first part was great just as it has been seventeen times before. My grandson Eric from Whenuapai, NZ made the trip with his mother Kim and sister Devon for this great family event dating back over 111 years when his great-great grandfather ran in 1902. He is the 5th Generation to do it or almost. We got to within 500 yards of the finish line coming down Commonwealth to the turn at Hereford when the second bomb went off. The course was immediately shut down by police, guard units and BAA officials. We piled up and stood there for about 10 minutes. A BAA official announced that the race was over. It was finished. No one could believe it. Some runners with cell phones said that 3 people were killed and many wounded. We heard the thud of the second explosion, but there was so much noise from spectators and sirens from ambulances, which is normal at that stage of the run, that we didn't think anything was wrong. When we heard of the 3 spectators killed, we bolted from the pack and tried to make our way to the finish line, but to no avail. Kim, Diana and Devon were at the finish line diagonally across Boylston Street at the entrance to the Pru and saw most of it. We walked back near the ball park and up Huntington Ave trying to get close, but police and guard units were everywhere preventing access. We made it back to the Hancock parking garage and to St. James Street where the family meeting area was located, but no one there. We waited there for 2 hours. No one knew any info about where the families were to meet. Now getting cold with only shorts and t-shirts; Diana had all our gear and at that point had to wonder if I still had a wife, daughter and granddaughter. We decided to go back to the Back Bay Train Station as that was the fall back position; they had to come back through this point as they arrived by train from Franklin earlier in the day. We waited here for 2 more hours when some kind soul let us use their cell phone. Kim's cell phone originates from NZ so there are some difficulties with going around the world to come back to Boston to make a local call. These kind folks contacted their business in Denver and managed to leave a text message, but no way to confirm she got it. Well another hour went by and I walked back to the family meeting area on St. James Street and still no one there, it was deserted except for the police. They told me that the family meeting area was relocated to the Boston Common, another 3/4 miles away. Got there and there was no family area. Feeling pretty bad about here. They said the meeting area was moved to the baggage reclaim area. Went back to the baggage area and no one there. Finally, went back to the Back Bay Train Station where Eric stood watch. Someone told us that the cell phone service was shut down, but they managed to get a land line and make contact. I went to the corner of the Fairmont Hotel and tried to get in, but again turned away as they thought there may be more bombs there. I stood on the corner shivering thinking of the worst possible outcome. Then a woman named Kim came up to me and said, "You look like you could use some help." I said, "I think you may be right". She called over to her husband Bob and he came over and took me back to their penthouse condo around the corner, gave me a warm sweatshirt and a cup of coffee. This is the only marathon that I did not put a \$20 bill in the bottom of my shoe just in case. We made contact using their land line back to NZ, through Turks & Caicos and finally back to my daughter's phone. They had been moved back to Kenmore Sq. with other spectators with no info on our condition or location. My brother's son Rich found us at the Back Bay Station and took us to Kenmore Sq. where we made our own family meeting area. For us this was to be fairly good day. We didn't finish the run the way we thought, but so much more fortunate than all those good folks, those spectators who make this marathon what it is. It's all so sad. We'll be fine and run another day.

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