

KEVIN CULLEN

# For emergency workers, a moment away



Jerry Foley, the great barman, cleared a table in the back on the lounge side of JJ Foley's, the famous South End tavern, just after midnight.

The young cops, their faces a mix of exhaustion and relief, sat down heavily. They weren't really there for the beer. They just wanted to sit. They just wanted to unwind, in a place where they didn't have to train their guns on somebody.

They raised their glasses, to a job well done. A 19-year-old kid who held 1 million people hostage in their own homes was finally in custody, and maybe, just maybe, Bostonians will get some answers to why he and his disaffected 26-year-old brother decided to kill and maim innocents at the finish line of the Boston Marathon.

"To Sean," they said.

Sean Collier was a beautiful kid. All he ever wanted to be was a cop. He was 26 years old, and he was not only admired by the students on the sprawling urban campus of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, he was loved.

There was the young woman who was assaulted on campus. She was terrified about pressing charges. Collier sat with her and held her hand, and she made the identification, and they arrested her attacker.

There was the student who spoke directly to the murdered cop on a tribute page: "I am brown and a foreigner so usually American police make me a little nervous, but I recall passing by you one time and deciding that I liked you, because you looked unusually nice and trustworthy."

But now Sean Collier is dead, assassinated as he sat in his cruiser by the Tsarnaev brothers, the murder that was the beginning of the end of the nihilistic rampage by a pair of men who turned on the very country that offered them sanctuary.

Another toast.

"To Dick," the cops said. "To Dick."

Dick Donohue, a Transit Police officer, lay in critical condition a few miles away at Mount Auburn Hospital, another victim of the murderous rage of a pair of brothers who spurned the welcome they got in Cambridge to leave a young cop fighting for his life in a hospital in Cambridge.

"They were in the academy together, Sean and Dick," one of the young cops said, almost to himself. "What are the odds of that?"

Eddie Kelly, a very fine firefighter, stood with Richie Paris, president of Local 718 of the firefighters union, just to the side, a sad smile on his face.

"This is one of the finest days in the history of the BPD," he said.

The cops nodded in appreciation.

"You see those guys," Eddie Kelly said, turning to me. "Some of those guys were with us at the finish line, after the bombs went off. And they were there tonight, taking the bomber in. They didn't kill him. They brought him to justice. I couldn't be more proud of our guys."

If it seemed odd that the most eloquent testimonial to the courage and tenacity and sheer professionalism of the Boston Police Department should come from a Boston firefighter, it shouldn't. It might be a cliché to suggest they are a band of brothers, but they are. That band includes sisters, like the women cops from District 4 who were at the finish line the other day and dove in with their male counterparts. Theirs is a fraternity and sorority forged in the blood and wounds of the people they and the EMTs and paramedics of the Emergency Medical Services work together on a daily basis to save. That's exactly what all of them were doing last Monday, when evil came to the Back Bay.

"Those guys have our backs," Kelly said, gesturing over to the table of cops. "Same with EMS. We're all in this together."

Richie Paris said it was all well and good that the cops — not just Boston, but the State Police, the T cops, the Watertown cops, all the municipal departments — were greeted with cheers after they lugged Dzhokhar Tsarnaev out of that boat and into Beth Israel, where 12 of his victims lay in hospital beds.

"The Boston cops deserve all the praise coming their way," Paris said. "But it would be better if the city would give them a raise. They should make as much as us. They haven't had a contract for three years. You want to honor cops? Pay them a living wage so they can put their kids through college. That's how you honor cops."

It was an early night. Everybody was whipped. Brendan Walsh, a great young cop who would run through a wall to save anybody anywhere, was walking past the back door when he stopped and shook hands with a young EMS guy.



MBTA

**Richard Donohue (left) and Sean Collier after a police academy graduation ceremony at Faneuil Hall.**

They shared a word and then Walsh was out the door, back to a home he hadn't seen in days.

"You see that kid Brendan said hi to on the way out," Kelly said. "That kid and his partner were with us on a call this morning. We had a jumper."

While Brendan Walsh and his BPD comrades were in Watertown, looking for the bomber, a distraught man was threatening to jump off the Washington Street bridge onto the Turnpike.

It was the same cast of characters who on Monday afternoon was saving lives on Boylston Street: the cops from District 4, the EMS trucks out of the South End, the firefighters of Engine 7, Tower Ladder 17, and Rescue One.

They talked the poor guy down — another life saved, far from the cameras in Watertown, far from the madding crowd.

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