

Friday, April 19, the day which a million or so Boston area residents were instructed to stay inside, off the streets while law enforcement officers of all categories exercised the dragnet in pursuit of the two young men charged with the bombings at the Boston Marathon and subsequent shootouts with police.

There was all-day, all-channel coverage of the events. There was amazing coordination between police departments large and small. Clearly an emergency situation was at hand when a NYPD mobile command post appeared on the scene.

While department cooperation was admirable, government is still required to protect individual civil liberties and a level of decency toward the citizenry. A WHDH commentator gave the blow-by-blow over constantly streaming visuals as a team of men in FBI jackets could be seen removing a woman from an apartment on Norfolk St. in Cambridge. The woman wore all black: head scarf, a long coat and slacks. She was carrying a toddler and black tote bag.

The G-men were polite to the point of opening their vehicle door for the lady and placing the bag and the child on the seat. One of the "fed's finest," lost all sense of chivalry when he motioned for the woman to raise her hands. He thereby proceeded to pat her down: shoulders, breasts, waist, back, hips, legs.

The position of the news camera filming the scene was at the agent's back and from a left angle. The view of the woman was straight on and minimally obscured by the agent. As the segment was run over and over by NBC's Boston affiliate, the woman was revealed to be Kathryn Russell, the wife of Tamerlan Tsarnaev, the older of the two fugitives. She was not charged with anything and her association with the two brothers does not mean that she is no longer entitled to basic respect and civility.

The camera operator on the scene provided shots of at least two female police officers on the scene. The "frisker" could have called one of them over to search Ms. Russell. Officers getting caught up in the moment is understandable but police work is not all hard-nosed strategy, tactics and maneuvers. The police should never neglect any aspect of their professionalism including how to treat women, whether they are suspects, arrestees or bystanders.

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