

Boston Marathon

by Jake Barnes

My wife was busy working in the yard. It was almost noon, and my stomach was growling. My wife volunteered me to go get a Subway sandwich. And, oh, get some bananas, too, from Safeway. She would do a big grocery run the following day, she said.

I zipped down Walnut in my truck and listened to the latest on the bombers on the radio. The younger one, the one they found in the boat, was still alive. I drove into the shopping center and walked to the store. I got bananas and then stood in line for half an hour while some woman haggled with a clerk. Then I discovered that I didn't have enough cash with me and had to pay with a credit card.

I returned to my truck with my bananas and some yellow flowers that I got for my wife. I buy her flowers because it makes her happy. We always have cut flowers in the house.

As I walked down to the Subway, I thought to myself that now, after the horror in Boston, everybody looks like a terrorist. We live in a multiracial community. There are Chinese, Indian, Middle Eastern, and white folks like me. Plenty of people with dark skin, lighter complexioned men with dark hair and black stubble beards.

I got my sandwich and walked back into the sea of cars and trucks, found mine, packed away my purchases, and drove off. As I negotiated an aisle of cars, I stopped and let a family cross in front of me. The man smiled and waved. Indian, I figured. At a stop sign a few yards further on, I stopped and motioned to the driver of a car full of light skinned, dark haired people, signaling them to go ahead. The car slowly, slowly eased into the intersection. One of the kids looked at me. I winked.

As I drove home, I thought how uneasy I had felt when I was out in public that day. I felt better later. When I got home I told my wife that everybody out there looked like a terrorist, but I had a solution for that, for how I felt.

“What's that?” she asked

I said be very, very nice to everybody.

