



Maximum Harm

The Tsarnaev Brothers, the FBI, and the Road to the Marathon Bombing

Michele R. McPhee

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The complicity and deadly consequences of the Boston Marathon bombing

Michele R. McPhee's brilliant investigative reporting uncovers explosive, previously unknown facts about the Boston Marathon bombing — secrets kept from the public about a young man desperate to become an American citizen who struck a deal with the US government. It was a deal that went horribly wrong, and the facts are revealed in *Maximum Harm: The Tsarnaev Brothers, the FBI, and the Road to the Marathon Bombing*.

On Patriot's Day 2013, brothers Tamerlan and Dzhokhar Tsarnaev, detonated two pressure cooker bombs near the finish line of the iconic Boston Marathon. The blasts killed Martin Richard, 8, who died with his mother weeping over him. Krystle Marie Campbell died holding her best friend's hand after mumbling, "it hurts." That friend, Karen Rand McWatters, lost her leg — one of 17 people who became amputees that afternoon. Lingzi Lu, a Boston University exchange student from China, died with a bloodcurdling final scream, her body riddled by shrapnel. McPhee was witness to the carnage and *Maximum Harm* chronicles her three-year investigation about the FBI's involvement with accused bomber Tamerlan Tsarnaev.

McPhee closely examines the brothers' family history, and the dangers of Islamic extremism at home and abroad. It also explores the role the U.S. intelligence community played in the recruitment, deployment, and cover-up of assets, and how this could have led to the deadly attacks in Boston.

"Was Tamerlan Tsarnaev made a promise by the FBI? One that wasn't kept and led him to kill?," asks McPhee.

McPhee tracks the Tsarnaev's timeline of terror from their moves from Kyrgyzstan to the U.S.; Tamerlan's arrest and radicalization history; and the FBI's recruit-

ment of Tamerlan as a mosque crawler to inform on radical separatists here and in Chechnya, in exchange for American citizenship. "Tamerlan traveled to a terrorist hotbed in Dagestan and returned to the U.S. six months later—while on multiple Terror Watch Lists—using his green card. Why can't anyone explain how he was able to get in and out of the country with such ease?"

"Of course the government is reluctant to discuss Tamerlan," says McPhee. "They have been since the day the bombs went off."

"Tamerlan was flagged by both the CIA and the FBI as a potential Islamic militant who, according to Russian counterterrorism officials, would travel to his motherland to meet with terrorists," reports McPhee. "They were right."

Maximum Harm tracks the Tsarnaev brothers' movements in the days leading up to the bombing, the subsequent investigation, the Tsarnaevs' murder of MIT police officer Sean Collier, the high-speed chase and shootout that killed Tamerlan, and the 16-hour manhunt that ended when Dzhokhar Tsarnaev was found bleeding and nearly dead in a dry-docked boat. Inside the hull he had written an anti-American screed that included the phrase, "know you are fighting men who look down the barrel of your gun and see heaven."

Arrest. Trial. Conviction. Death penalty. *Maximum Harm* is the Boston Marathon bombing in a neat, tidy, well-scripted and uncensored version of events. McPhee examines the successes and failings of using informants to help the war on terror, and untangles the many threads of circumstance, coincidence, collusion, motive, and opportunity that resulted in the deadliest attack on the city of Boston to date.

Advance praise for

MAXIMUM HARM

The Tsarnaev Brothers, the FBI, and the Road to the Marathon Bombing

"*Maximum Harm* is the latest example of McPhee's investigative excellence and exposes many of the details kept secret from the public, leaving the reader questioning if justice was truly served."

—**Former Somerville, MA Police Chief and Retired Special Agent in Charge/Area Police Director of the United States Drug Enforcement Administration, Thomas Pasquarello**

"In *Maximum Harm*, Michele McPhee uncovers shocking new truths about the Boston marathon bombers and those in government, law enforcement and inside their own community who gave them free reign to plot and execute one of the most vicious terror attacks ever carried out on American soil. This book will grab you, shake you and will not let you go!" —**Casey Sherman, *New York Times* bestselling author of *The Finest Hours* and *Boston Strong***

"McPhee nails it. Happiness, fear, tragedy, anger, heroism, and hope are all on display in this riveting new book about terror in Boston. A must-read, so we never forget, and learn from, the lessons of that historic day"

—**Scott Brown, former United States senator and author of *Against All Odds: My Life of Hardship, Fast Breaks, and Second Chances***

"*Maximum Harm* is a riveting, eye-opening page-turner that takes you into the real world of international terrorism and the difficulties for local, state, and federal law enforcement. . . . It raises the question: Are we prepared?" —**Bernard B. Kerik, New York City police commissioner (retired)**

"No single reporter has covered the Boston bombing as thoroughly as Michele McPhee. She knows Boston—its streets, its cops, and its corridors of power. *Maximum Harm* is riveting—a tribute to the first responders, and, startlingly, a troubling exposé of the FBI's botched handling of the Tsarnaev brothers. You may think you know this story, but until you read this book, you don't."

—**T. J. English, *New York Times*–bestselling author of *Where the Bodies Were Buried* and *The Westies***

"The journalistic integrity and investigative skills of Michele R. McPhee have once again proven to be a rare commodity. Her reporting in *Maximum Harm* clearly proves the government at best lied or covered up, at worse falsified, the facts of a terrorist attack on American soil. Yet McPhee not only dug up the truth through her innumerable law enforcement sources, she exploited the fact that justice has yet to be served. A great read for those of us who are fascinated with the truth." —**Jerry Flynn, Executive Director New England Patrolmen's Benevolent Association, retired Lowell, MA police officer**

"Michele, like all great investigators, well understands one of the keys to unraveling a major case is the ability to recover unseen and seemingly irretrievable facts through the use of well placed sources. Michele's tenacious investigative acumen and virtuous reporting, on display for years in New York City and Boston, have culminated in a thoroughly engrossing account of the Boston Marathon Bombing and the in-depth investigation which followed. Michele's chronicling of the staggering details surrounding this act of terror is light years ahead of the standard Hollywood crime drama and what she has uncovered is truly fascinating."

—**Sean Foley retired NYPD detective first grade**



MICHELE R. MCPHEE has been nominated for three Emmy awards for investigative journalism and works as a Boston-based producer for the 'Brian Ross Investigative Unit' at ABC News. She is the host of a daily radio talk show on Boston's WMEX. McPhee earned many journalism awards as the police bureau chief at the *New York Daily News* and wrote an award-winning column at the *Boston Herald*. She has written for *New York*, *Newsweek*, *People*, *Boston*, and other national and international magazines. She is the author of five true crime titles: *A Date with Death*, which became a Lifetime movie; *A Professor's Rage*; *When Evil Rules*; *Heartless*; and *A Mob Story*, currently in development as a feature film. She lives in Boston.