

'He's a witness not a suspect': Burned Saudi student who had apartment raided is ruled out by police

- Bomb squad among 20 officers combing flat, bags of evidence removed
- Police also hunting 'dark-skinned man' with hooded dark-colored sweatshirt and backpack seen trying to get into restricted area
- Speculation mounts over who could be behind the attack that left three dead
- Fingers point towards either Islamic militants or right-wing extremists who chose to attack on symbolic Patriot's Day
- Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel called bombings 'cruel act of terror'
- One of the bombs had been placed in a metal pressure cooker and was designed to look like a discarded item, police sources say

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The Saudi student who was detained for 'acting suspiciously' at the marathon finish line has been ruled out as a suspect by federal officials and is said to be a witness helping police with their inquiries.

Detectives and bomb disposal officers raided Abdulrahman Ali Alharbi's apartment last night in the Revere area of Boston and could be seen removing several bags of evidence, though he was not charged with anything.

The 22-year-old, who is studying English, is still in hospital after suffering from serious burns and is said to be cooperating fully with authorities. He was tackled to the ground by a civilian who believed he was acting suspiciously.

Saudi official's at the country's embassy in Washington also said that the man was being questioned as a witness only.

The Saudi official cited information provided to the embassy by U.S. law enforcement officials.

'We're not aware of any Saudi suspect or Saudi person of interest,' said the Saudi official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because of the preliminary nature of the information.

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Detectives and bomb disposal officers raided Abdulrahman Ali Alharbi's apartment last night in the Revere area of Boston but he was not charged with anything



'Crude bombs': Both of the bombs were small, likely homemade devices and initial tests showed no C-4 or other high-grade explosive material



Police and federal officials exit an apartment complex at 364 Ocean Avenue with a possible connection to the earlier explosions that occurred during the Boston Marathon on Monday



364 Ocean Ave in Revere - which police and Federal investigators searched this evening after they identified a 'Saudi national' who was detained at the scene





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Pictured: Images of a man in cuffs were posted online but police were keen to underline there had been no arrests. Officers said they were speaking to several people as would be expected in any major incident



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Other residents in this smart 13-storey complex said three young men lived in a fifth floor apartment. Several believed he had Anglicized his Saudi name to Jason



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The Saudi's roommate said: 'When I came home the police were at our apartment. They asked lots of questions. Then the FBI and other officers came. They took some clothes away and searched everything'

WAS THE TIMING SIGNIFICANT? PATRIOTS' DAY IS REVERED BY RIGHT-WING GROUPS OPPOSED TO THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

- Yesterday's attack took place on Patriots' Day, which marks the first battle of the Revolutionary War and the 'shot heard 'round the world.' It is a day held in reverence by right-wing domestic groups and others who oppose the federal government.
- The 1995 bombing of the Oklahoma City federal building, which killed 168, occurred the day after Patriots' Day. Bomber Timothy McVeigh was said believe the date was significant.
- The federal siege of the Branch Dravidian compound, which left 82 members of the cult dead, began on Patriots' Day in 1993.
- Today is also Tax Day, when federal income tax returns are due. In recent years, it has been seized on by members of the Tea Party as cause to protest federal government policies and tax rates.
- A Justice Department source tells MailOnline that authorities are looking into the possibility that the Boston attack, which killed three and injured 144 more at the finish line of the Boston Marathon, could have been planned to coincide with Patriots' Day.
- President Barack Obama himself acknowledged the significance of the holiday during his briefing this afternoon.
- 'Today is Patriots Day,' he said. 'A day that reflects the freedom Boston has celebrated throughout its history.'

The Saudi student said he had been at dinner with friends the night before and was at the marathon simply because he 'wanted to see the end of the race'.

One of his two flat mates, who would only give his name as Mohamed Bada, told the MailOnline: 'He is a sweet kid, a kind person. He would not do this or hurt anyone.'

He described him as a devout Muslim and a soccer fan who is from the city of Medina in Saudi Arabia.

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'When I came home the police were at our apartment. They asked lots of questions. Then the FBI and other officers came. They took some clothes away and searched everything.

'My roommate is a student, he has been living here for five months. I am not telling you his name because it is not fair to him.'

It is not clear if agents found anything in the raid, but Revere fire officials said they were called out to support bomb-squad officers as part of the investigation of the 'person of interest'.

Other residents in the smart 13-storey complex said three young men lived in a fifth floor apartment.

'There are a lot of rumors floating about. This is a building that has been packed with people from the Middle East in recent years – it is a very popular area with Saudi students,' said Gita Lopez, who lives in one of the adjoining six blocks in the complex that is known as Water's Edge.

Staff at the building's leasing office refused to comment on the suspect or his friends. But one said: 'We are co-operating fully with the police.'

Jim Sudmeier, a 75-year-old medical researcher, said he went down in the elevator from his 10th floor apartment to see what was going on.

'On the fifth floor there were between five and eight hulking men in black with baseball caps,' he said. 'I was told they were FBI or AFT. They just stared me out, so I pushed the elevator button to go back to my apartment. Outside there were agents everywhere. No one would say what they were doing. My neighbors are all talking about the boys on the fifth floor.

'I don't know them because people are constantly moving in and out of this place.'

'Both areas had blue mail boxes at the exact spots where the bombs went off. I am sure the postal boxes had something to do with it.

'To me this smacks of home-grown terrorism – someone wanting to make a point about Patriots Day or something.'



Kitchen bomb: The pressure cooker bomb is known as a 'highly effective' weapon of al Qaeda



Aftermath: Smoke billows over the finish line after the first bomb was detonated, inflicting tragedy and panic at the race

But other neighbors pointed to Boston's role in the September 11 2001 terrorist attacks.

Brothers Hamza and Ahmed Ghamdi spent their last four nights hiding out at hotels in nearby Cambridge before hijacking Flight 175 moments after take off from Boston's Logan Airport.

The bombs had been placed in six-liter pressure cookers packed with ball bearings and nails and placed in black duffel bags, it was revealed today.

They were likely detonated by timers, though this has not been confirmed.

The U.S. government has warned federal agencies in the past that pressure cookers have been used in various parts of the world to make bombs.

A Department of Homeland Security memo called it 'a technique commonly taught in Afghan terrorist training camps'.

'Typically, these bombs are made by placing TNT or other explosives in a pressure cooker and attaching a blasting cap at the top of the pressure cooker,' the memo said.

Terrorism expert Jeffrey Beatty spoke to CNN and said they are often used by Taliban and al Qaeda militants to make IED's but stressed: 'That doesn't mean it was the Taliban -- other people can read about this.'

Today President Obama once again addressed the nation about the bombs, which killed three and left more than 170 injured, and confirmed it was an 'act of terror'.

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He lauded the response of the runners, spectators and first responders in the wake of the attack.

'If you want to know who we are, what America is, how we respond to evil, that is it: selflessly, compassionately, unafraid,' he said.

Obama said investigators 'don't have a sense of motivation yet' as they begin to evaluate the attack but despite the atrocity of it, he declared: 'The American people refuse to be terrorized.'

Richard DesLauriers, the special agent in charge of the FBI's Boston Division, said: 'We will go to the ends of the Earth to identify the subject or subjects who are responsible for this despicable crime -- and we will do everything we can to bring them to justice.'

'Our mission is clear: to bring to justice those responsible...The American public wants answers. The citizens of the city of Boston and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts want and deserve answers.'

He said investigators had received 'voluminous tips' and were interviewing witnesses and analyzing the crime scene.

Gov Deval Patrick said that contrary to earlier reports, no unexploded bombs were found. He said the only explosives were the ones that went off.

At Boston's Brigham and Women's Hospital, investigators seized the Saudi student's clothes to examine whether they held any evidence that he was behind the attack, which is being called the worst terrorist attack on U.S. soil since 9/11.

On Tuesday, police sources told the Associated Press the bombs were made from pressure cookers filled with metal.

When they exploded around 2.50pm, they left victims covered in as many as 40 wounds each and attacked their lower extremities, leaving many needing amputations.

Witnesses described seeing body parts flying through the air and shoes that 'still had flesh in them'.



Massachusetts General Hospital, where 22 victims of the bomb blast are being treated, was locked down for two hours after a suspicious package was reported in the parking garage across the street



evacuate the area following the explosions

Evacuation: Police were desperately trying to





Police investigators leave an apartment complex in Revere, Massachusetts, USA, 16 April 2013



Investigators were seen leaving the scene with brown paper evidence bags, trash bags and a duffel bag

Law sources told the [New York Post](#) that after the man was grabbed by police, he smelled of gun powder and said, 'I thought there would be a second bomb' before asking, 'Did anyone die?'

The Saudi man was tackled by a bystander by the scene who thought he was acting suspiciously.

Investigators were seen leaving the scene with brown paper evidence bags, trash bags and a duffel bag.

A law enforcement source told CBS: 'They see him running away from the device. Now, a reasonable person would be running away. But this person had noticed him before. This is a civilian -- chases him down, tackles him, turns him over to the Boston police.'

'The individual is being looked at [and] was suffering from burn injury. That means this person was pretty close to wherever this blast went off, but not so close as to suffer the serious injuries that other people did.'

Though many patients were treated for minor cuts and scrapes, doctors have also been 'pulling ball bearings and projectiles out of people in the emergency room'.

It was reported today that the bombs were in pressure cookers inside black duffel bags and were designed to propel shrapnel and shards of metal.

Rep Pete King, a Long Island republican who chairs the house counterterrorism subcommittee told ABC news that the bombings had 'all the trademarks of an al Qaeda attack'.

Defense secretary Chuck Hagel today called the bombings a 'cruel act of terror' and said it will be 'approached as an act of terror'.

Police had said earlier on Monday that they were searching for a 'dark-skinned or black male' wearing a dark-colored hooded sweatshirt and a backpack in connection with the twin explosions.

A TIMELINE OF TERROR ON US SOIL: A HISTORY OF HOMELAND SECURITY



1920

September 16, New York City: Thirty five people are killed and hundreds injured after a TNT bomb planted in an unattended horse-drawn wagon explodes on Wall Street. Bolshevik or anarchist terrorists were blamed but nobody was ever convicted.

1975

January 24, New York City: A blast tears through the historic Fraunces Tavern killing four and injuring more than 50. Puerto Rican nationalist group (FALN) later claims responsibility.

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1988

December 21, Lockerbie, Scotland: A New York-bound Pan-Am Boeing 747 is blown out of the sky and crashes on the Scottish village. All 259 aboard are killed and 11 on the ground. Passengers included 35 Syracuse University students and many U.S. military personnel. Libya formally admitted responsibility 15 years later and offered \$2.7 billion compensation to victims' families.

1993

Febuary 26, New York City: A bomb exploded in basement garage of World Trade Center, killing 6 and injuring at least 1,040 others. In 1995, militant Islamist Sheik Omar Abdel Rahman and 9 others were convicted of conspiracy charges, and in 1998, Ramzi Yousef, believed to have been the mastermind, was convicted of the bombing. Al-Qaeda involvement is suspected.

1995

April 19, Oklahoma City: A car bomb explodes outside a federal office building killing 168 people, including 19 children. Over 220 buildings sustained damage. Timothy McVeigh and Terry Nichols were later convicted in the anti-government plot to avenge the Branch Davidian standoff in Waco, Texas., exactly two years earlier

2001

September 11, New York City, Arlington, Virginia, and Shanksville, Pennsylvania: Hijackers crash two commercial jets into the twin towers of the World Trade Center (pictured); Within hours, two more jets were crashed into the Pentagon and a field in rural Pennsylvania. Total dead and missing numbered 2,992, including 19 hijackers. Al-Qaeda, led by Osama bin Laden claim responsibility.

2009

June 1, Little Rock, Arkansas: Abdulhakim Muhammed, a Muslim convert from Memphis, Tennessee, shoots dead one soldier and wounds anotheroutside a military recruitment centre. He later claimed ties to al-Qaeda, calling the shooting a jihadi attack.

December 25: Nigerian 'pants bomber' Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab fails to detonate a bomb secreted in his underwear on a flight from Amsterdam to Detroit. He claimed links to al Qaeda.

2010

May 10, Jacksonville, Florida: A pipe bomb explodes while approximately 60 Muslims are praying in the mosque. Nobody is injured.

October 29: Two packages of explosives are found on separate cargo planes bound from Yemen to the United States. Each was discovered en route at stop-overs in England and Dubai.

Five minutes before the first explosion, officials said the hooded man attempted to gain entry to a restricted area but was turned away. Authorities say he may be a foreign national, based on his accent.

Other reports suggested one line of inquiry was an individual caught on camera before the attack carrying multiple backpacks into the area 20 minutes before the deadly blasts.

Separately, pictures of a man in handcuffs surrounded by law enforcement officials circulated Twitter on Monday evening. But authorities didn't identify the man or say whether his arrest was related to the blasts or if it was the 'Saudi national'.

'At this time, we haven't been notified of any arrests or anyone apprehended,' a police spokesperson said.

It came as police were believed to be looking at whether bombs were planted in trashcans along the route.

One of the runners said there were a number of bomb-sniffing dogs at the start and finish line, which he thought was odd.

University of Mobile's Cross Country Coach Ali Stevenson told [Local 15](#): 'They kept making announcements to the participants do not worry, it's just a training exercise.'

He said the presence of law enforcement spotters on the roof at the start of the race also made the seasoned marathoner suspect police must have had some threat or suspicion called in.

But government officials deny this and say there were no warnings of any kind.

Stevenson had just finished the marathon before the explosions. His wife had been sitting in one of the seating sections where an explosion went off, but she had left her seat and was walking to meet up with him.

At Massachusetts General Hospital, Alasdair Conn, chief of emergency services, said: 'This is something I've never seen in my 25 years here ... this amount of carnage in the civilian population. This is what we expect from war.'

As police scurried to find leads that would lead them to the culprits, speculation grew that it looked more like a right-wing terrorist attack rather than al Qaeda-inspired extremism.

Richard Barrett, the former United Nations co-ordinator for the al Qaeda and Taliban monitoring team, said the timing of the attack on Patriots' Day and the relatively small size of the devices suggested the work of a domestic extremist.

But Mr Barrett, who has served with MI5, MI6 and the Foreign Office, said: 'This happened on Patriots' Day, it is also the day Americans are supposed to have their taxes in, and Boston is quite a symbolic city. These are all little indicators.'

He added that it was still too early to confidently say who was to blame.

His comments came after U.S. supercop Bill Bratton, a former head of Boston police who is now based in London, warned there are 'no shortage of potential suspects' behind the explosions.

Counter terrorism expert Rick Nelson, of the Center for Strategic & International Studies, said the number of co-ordinated blasts suggested a 'complexity' that would be difficult for an individual to carry out alone.

'It was perhaps not one person but a group who were involved,' he said. 'The location suggests they were looking for maximum media value so that the explosions were caught by television cameras.'

The two blasts on Monday went off almost concurrently near the finish line of the marathon.

Police initially said a third blast occurred at the John F.Kennedy Presidential Library but later reported it as an unrelated fire.

Cell phone service was shut down across the area to prevent any potential remote detonations as police feared there were secondary devices.

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Multiple reports were flooding in in the moments after the attack, saying there were devices reported outside Harvard and other sites along the marathon route. But today it was confirmed that there were only two devices.

Massachusetts General Hospital, where 22 victims of the bomb blast are being treated, was forced into lock-down for about two hours after a suspicious package was reported in the parking garage across the street.

Bomb sniffing dogs from the Rhode Island State Police, SWAT officers from the Boston police department and bomb squad officers searched the entire parking structure, floor-by-floor.

Authorities found one bag, but determined it was not a threat and contained nothing suspicious.

As the investigation continued into Monday night, all off-duty officers in the city were called back on duty and dog units were sent in to help the emergency response.

The scene of the blasts will remain cordoned off for at least 24 hours as forensic work continues.

Police were pleading with onlookers to head home over fears the dangers remained in the downtown area of the city.

NBC reported that the devices which caused the blasts were ‘small homemade bombs’ as the FBI referred it as a ‘terrorist attack’.

Police departments across the country including San Francisco and New York have been put on heightened alert.

Today, a plane was brought back to the gate at Logan airport after two passengers on board were speaking Arabic and people grew concerned.



Controlled explosions: Officers were said to be carrying out controlled explosions on three secondary device

In London security will now be assessed ahead of the marathon being held there on Sunday.

A no-fly zone was temporarily introduced over the city and has now been lifted.

Runners still on the course were being bussed out yesterday as officers began the hard task of trying to work out who would cause such an attack.

U.S. President Barack Obama was notified and directed his administration to provide whatever assistance was necessary, the White House said.

No groups have claimed credit for the attack and officials say no intelligence alerted them to a threat prior to the marathon.

Anyone with information about the explosions should call 1800-494-TIPS.

Boston Marathon bombing caught on video WARNING GRAPHIC CONTENT



Stay home: Boston officials react to Marathon bombings



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- [UM Coach: Bomb Sniffing Dogs, Spotters on Roofs Before Explosions](#)
- [FBI grills Saudi man in Boston bombings - m.NYPOST.com](#)