



**Dic Donohue, retired Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) sergeant, on Resilience in the line of fire**

## [Transcript](#)

**Mike Kearney:**

Hey everybody. I know that I've shared that my dad was a policeman for over thirty-five years in San Francisco. And you know I learned while growing up with him that policemen are just human beings and absolutely not perfect. But throughout my formative years I got to see, on a daily basis, the stress and challenges of the job for my dad. I probably only knew a fraction of what he was going through. Situations where he put his life on the line because of a sense of duty. It was his job. To pivot to today's guest, we all remember the Boston bombing. It's one of those events that you probably remember exactly where you were. I certainly do. You probably also remember the days after the bombing. The intense investigation of who did it. And the subsequent manhunt for the Tsarnaev brothers on the evening of April 13, 2015. And today I have the absolute privilege of sitting down with Dic Donohue, a MBTA police officer who not only put his life on the line but also nearly died in the line of duty. You know, Dic was in the middle of that man hunt and was shot during a fire fight with the Tsarnaev brothers. Dic's story is an incredible testament to his resilience, his resolve to live, the love of his family and friends, and the risk that officers take every day in protecting the community. You know, I've said it before that I am on a quest to find people out of the business world who can teach us a thing or two about resilience through their life story. And my guess is that Dic will have a lot to share with us today.

**Dic Donohue:**

I would not say hysteria, but a little bit of confusion, frustration. And I think if you ask me to explain how I felt, there was like antifreeze kind of pumped in through your veins. It was just completely cold and serious, especially when you find out that your brother officer had been killed. Again, it was another one of these situations that you would not think would happen. It is that and two hours later just being outside—basically outside of Harvard Square—and hearing that

there are officers who need assistance in Watertown and there is a huge shootout going on.

**Mike Kearney:** Welcome to [Resilient](#), our little podcast where we feature stories from leaders on risk, crisis, and disruption. My name is Mike Kearney, a partner in Deloitte's Strategic Risk practice. But this is not about me and certainly not about Deloitte. This is about leaders, CEOs, board members, other leaders, even folks outside of the business world who have something to teach us about resilience. I get those stories by jumping on a plane and meeting our guests on their home turf. And today I am in Boston, one of my favorite cities, on a beautiful summer day. I'm really looking forward to picking Dic's brain. The events that led up to the shooting, his path to recovery, and most importantly what he learned about resilience. Returning to police work and then subsequently moving into civilian life and then what would he say to Dzhokhar Tsarnaev if he could speak to him. I can't wait to hear his answer. So without further ado, let's get to my conversation with Dic Donohue, an American hero.

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**Mike Kearney:** Hey, Dic, it is an honor to have you as a guest on *Resilient*. Welcome.

**Dic Donohue:** Thank you.

**Mike Kearney:** This is fantastic. When I think about your story, we get into all of the back story, but the first question I really wanted to get into is that your story really wants to bring to national attention the sacrifices that I think policemen make on a daily basis. I think I mentioned my dad was a cop. In your experience, what do you think makes policemen special?

**Dic Donohue:** It is that almost like living two lives, being a normal human being, a working member of the community, but also having to respond to some of the worst situations in the city, country, or the world.

**Mike Kearney:** But what do you think compels somebody to want to do that work.

**Dic Donohue:** There is a lot of drive. For me, I think people have personal reasons. For a lot of folks it is a calling. For others it is a family tradition. Mine is sort of a family tradition. My brother went to become a police officer first and...

**Mike Kearney:** I did not know that.

**Dic Donohue:** And I just sort of fell into it as well. But everybody has some kind of calling, some kind of drive to do something in the community, do something fun. It is a terrible job but at the same time it is a fun job. It is interesting, it is exciting, and you never know what is around the corner. So I think that is a major draw as well.

**Mike Kearney:** So I thought I was either going to be a policeman, since my dad was a cop, or an Airforce pilot, and here I am a consulting partner at Deloitte. I do not know what happened, but let us talk about you. Where did you grow up?

**Dic Donohue:** I grew up in Winchester, Massachusetts. So just a couple miles outside of Boston in a nice little suburb.

**Mike Kearney:** So you ultimately went to VMI, Virginia Military Institute with a good friend of mine, Alex Hasley. Alex, giving you a call out. For those of us who may not be really familiar, can you share a bit about VMI? Like what makes it special? Maybe it is not special to you but what makes VMI, VMI?

**Dic Donohue:** Well, it has got to be one of the toughest colleges or universities to graduate from. It is incredibly difficult when I was there.

**Mike Kearney:** What makes it difficult?

**Dic Donohue:** There were not a lot of luxuries or amenities. You could not sleep in, you could not skip class, you had to be dressed in a uniform, some sort of uniform all day, all night. And you only had certain hours to sleep, certain hours you could study or be at a sports' practice and it goes on all year. And if you make a mistake—like you would every once in a while—you end up not being able to leave campus or having to march penalty tours with a rifle, marching up and down the parade deck for hours on end on a Saturday or Sunday. So just to throw those couple of challenges in a time, where most people think it is fun and partying, we had a lot of fun there but just in different ways.

**Mike Kearney:** It sounds like very... So what compelled you to go there?

**Dic Donohue:** I am not sure. I wanted a little bit of a challenge and I think it definitely helped me personally. I could focus more academically and improve some leadership skills and I also got a scholarship to go there so that helped a lot.

**Mike Kearney:** That helps. Well, if you got a scholarship there, I am guessing you could have gotten scholarships other places.

**Dic Donohue:** Right.

**Mike Kearney:** And what kind of leader do you think you emerged from?

**Dic Donohue:** I am not really sure. I never thought of it that way. I just try to first of all do the right thing, maintain that honor, that integrity, but try to do it, kind of, in a calm manner. When things get crazy just, kind of, I would not quiet down, but calmly take control of the situation. Kind of the bigger things for me I do not get too riled up about the huge, huge problems. The small ones, even my wife will say, if I spill my coffee I get really angry about that for about 10 seconds. But the big problems is when I can step back and...

**Mike Kearney:** When you get your focus. Your zone, yeah.

**Dic Donohue:** Yeah, so you get back and get in the problem-solving type method. I think that really helped me as a police officer and even some of my experiences afterwards, even in the hospitality sector, in learning how to almost—I hate to use terms like de-escalate a situation or use some communication skills and step back and be able to assess the situation and look back and say okay, things are not as bad as they are going to be. We are going to take some time and work through it and I think that resiliency built up over the time at VMI definitely helps you in a bigger, crisis-type situation.

**Mike Kearney:** I love the fact that you said do the right thing. So you have a degree from VMI.

**Dic Donohue:** Mm-hmm.

**Mike Kearney:** And then make sure I got this right, master's degrees from University of Massachusetts, Lowell and the University Limerick, Ireland.

**Dic Donohue:** Limerick. Limerick.

**Mike Kearney:** Limerick.

**Dic Donohue:** Just like the poem.

**Mike Kearney:** I cannot believe I just did that. Anyways, and you spent time in hospitality. So how did you get into law enforcement?

**Dic Donohue:** Well, it is all about service. I worked in hospitality. It is all about service. I always wanted to work.

**Mike Kearney:** That is the connection to hospitality.

**Dic Donohue:** That is right. I always wanted to work and travel. I enjoy it. I still do. I get the chance to—now I am traveling a lot across American, some states and places I have never been to. But it was all about having a passion for that and I still like to travel. Now it is more of a leisure activity. I went to University of Limerick, got a master's degree in international tourism. I still have some friends over there so it is great to land at Shannon and go right to somebody's house and take a nap and refresh when I go to visit or bring the kids over. So I worked in hospitality and tourism.

I enjoyed it but part of it was the recession hitting and things getting tough in that industry in having this desire to do a little bit more with my life and to get back in uniform and serve the community more. So it was the double draw, and of course my brother took the police test the same time as I did and he was coming out with good stories. And I said no, my little brother's not going to have all the good stories. I am going to become a cop. I am going to work in a bigger department.

I am going to work in Boston. He works in the suburbs. And I am going to have a crazier story. So I said it is time, and then a year after I joined, I went to the police academy at age 30. I was not the oldest one there and I still beat up on

the younger guys running wise, but it was definitely an adventure and a total change in lifestyle at age 30.

**Dic Donohue:** My brother gave me a little bit of advice. He said this is going to be one of the best times you have as a police officer, so enjoy it. So I liked getting up early and driving in and going for a run and doing some PT in the sand on Wollaston Beach there. It did not bother me that much.

**Mike Kearney:** Did not faze you.

**Dic Donohue:** Yeah.

**Mike Kearney:** So let us go back to the - and God talk about changing tone - but at the Boston Bombing, so April 15, 2013, we are going to get into a few days later, but I am just curious. Where were you when the Boston Bombing actually happened?

**Dic Donohue:** Well, if we had video I could basically point to you down the street about three and a half, four miles that way. I was out on right in front of Marianne's Bar. That is kind of a famous haunt for Boston college students. I have been there. I can almost smell hangover coming from the—the hangover and the stale beer coming from the place—because you know what it is like and there is Eagle Deli across the street and they make these huge sandwiches and big plates of fries. So we would go to Eagle Deli for breakfast and right before that I was actually...

**Mike Kearney:** Were you on shift at the time?

**Dic Donohue:** I was on shift.

**Mike Kearney:** Okay, you were on shift.

**Dic Donohue:** Everybody was ordered in, so that weekend if I may actually start on the 14th. I had some friends in town. We had gone to the Red Sox game. Actually, a buddy of mine from VMI came in with his girlfriend and she was going to run the race. She is a great runner. Sub three hours every time.

**Mike Kearney:** Wow.

**Dic Donohue:** And we went to the Red Sox game on Saturday. It was kind of overcast but it was a cool weekend. It was starting to get into spring. And the next day we went to brunch. Everything was pretty normal. At the morning of the 15th, I dropped Katherine off. She was going to go get the bus to the finish line and my wife was going to go meet them at some point and go to transit police headquarters. Getting our gear ready, we had the conversation so you can bring your bulletproof vest. We probably do not need all this extra stuff because nothing happens on Marathon Monday. So head out to Cleveland Circle, stand in front of Marianne's Bar basically. Train was coming behind us. Everybody was happy and cheery.

**Dic Donohue:** Right now, I could probably put you within 10 feet of where I heard that first radio call and who I was standing with and what exactly was happening at the time.

**Mike Kearney:** And what did you say when you heard it come in? What was the initial message? What did you hear?

**Dic Donohue:** When I heard, "There has been some kind of explosion. I am going upstairs." That was from a female officer who was standing probably a quarter mile from where we are. And she was down in the station and goes up and I was like oh, great. Somebody who had fireworks. Literally that is what I think.

**Mike Kearney:** That is the first thing that goes through your mind, fireworks.

**Dic Donohue:** Yeah. Because a few years ago that had been, I think, a crazy defrocked priest. I cannot remember who it was. There was a gentleman who ran out and tackled one of their lead runners a few years ago, so I figured, oh, it is this guy again. Nothing.

**Mike Kearney:** Like nobody would ever do a bomb at a marathon.

**Dic Donohue:** It is the last thing you think of. And 15 seconds later, it was a second radio call saying, there has been another explosion and we have fatalities. And then you are like, oh. Oh, boy.

**Mike Kearney:** Something is going on.

**Dic Donohue:** Something is happening. But being four miles away, it is 15 minutes, people are still cheering and runners are still going by. And only a few people know what is going on. There is a Dunkin Donuts across the street. I remember taking a step in there just to see what happened and there is already pictures up on the TV in the corner in there of what is going on. It was just something completely unexpected and to be honest, I thought it was going to be a lot worse. It was bad, but most people forget at this point there was a fire at the JFK Library and I was like—oh, boy—now this is terrorism because they are attacking over there and that is over by UMASS Boston. So you are like, is this some kind of...

**Mike Kearney:** So I do not remember the fire. Was that accidental?

**Dic Donohue:** Absolutely.

**Mike Kearney:** It just was totally coincidental.

**Dic Donohue:** Unrelated, coincidental, and when I heard that, then I was like—oh, my God. Calling Kim and making sure...

**Mike Kearney:** Is Kim your wife?

**Dic Donohue:** Yeah, my wife. Calling my wife, Kim, because she had my then six-month-old son. She was dropping off my friend in Boston to watch the marathon and pick up Katherine. And she actually made it to the finish line to find her afterwards

and it was just something that—it was like your job became real serious right away with just a flick of a switch.

**Mike Kearney:** What did your day look like? I want to get to April 18, but what did the rest of April 15 look like for you?

**Dic Donohue:** So we were redeployed all over the city. Right away, they took us from our posts once the marathon was starting to get shut down. They were holding runners up. It was like an action plan kicked in. We are separate from Boston Police, we are separate from the State Police. We are primarily concerned with the transit system. That is what our police department is. And I was redeployed with another officer to the downtown crossing station. So it is a major station. Orange Line and Red Line intersect there.

**Mike Kearney:** So can I ask, when you say redeployed, meaning you were taken out of your role and integrated into kind of police activities in the city? Is that right? I am just trying to...

**Dic Donohue:** I was already in Boston but the main transit hub, if you were going to say where would a terrorist attack more likely to happen, where the Red and Orange Line intersect and where a lot of people go, that is a high value target.

**Mike Kearney:** I see what you are saying.

**Dic Donohue:** I am not sure why exactly. I was placed in one position verse another, but I was told by my commanding officers that I and another officer were to go to this station and we were actually given—I would not say given command of, but we had National Guard troops attached to us. So we had about five or six of them and they did not have much familiarity with the station or what to do and we sort of just had to do with what we had. We said okay, we are not going to stand here in a circle.

There were not a lot of people traveling then. Let us just man the exits, make sure the doors are locked, check the wastebaskets, make sure there are no unattended packages. And between I and another officer basically try to communicate with folks that did not have radios, switch phone numbers, and just try to make sure that things were safe and working for just that night before we were eventually sent home.

**Mike Kearney:** Was there precedence, or maybe a better way of saying it, did you practice working with other agencies or like the national guard or was that kind of like learning on the fly figuring out what to do?

**Dic Donohue:** So this was learning on the fly. There had been some training activities and since then there has been a lot more. But it was not really done or it was done with some people but not others. Say you were off shift and there was a training activity, there were annual training events but it was not as formalized as being

with the transit police and I worked downtown that I knew a lot of the Amtrak police officers that worked out of South Station.

So I had worked with them and coordinated with them before but we were attached to state troopers from out of the area. You work sort of hand in hand and you can call each other for help, but it was not necessarily working with these folks every day or every month or every week or the same folks. So it was a learning on the fly, although we had integrated on previous occasions.

**Mike Kearney:**

It is interesting, though. The reason why I like interviewing people outside of the business world is to drop parallels. One of the things I hear you saying is as a result of those learnings, the practice and the training has now been integrated into the way things are done now as a result of that situation. Is there anything that sticks out? Because I do want to move a couple of days later, three days later. Is there anything though before we move on to April 15 that just sticks out? Anything that you would want to share, whether it is, I do not know, heroics of somebody or maybe something that the general public just would not have seen that day that you just reflect on and you say that is one thing that I remember?

**Dic Donohue:**

I was not at the finish line so I am not going to tell you the stories of the people that were there. Certainly, there were heroics by civilians, people in the medical tents, EMTs, folks working at Marathon Sports, fires—just so many people. You are going to see Jeff Bowman's moving with Carlos Hardondo and those folks, incredible, incredible lifesaving stories. Everybody that was transported from the scene there who was not already deceased, survived. So incredible stuff happening on all fronts.

So the hospitals, I had friends that worked with the hospital, family working in another hospital, incredible, incredible efforts there. Some things you would not see, which are so minor in comparison. But one thing I remember that week was Downtown Boston was shut down more or less. It was really quiet. I had pictures of Boylston Street. It was eerie. You go up there now and the weather is beautiful. There are tons of people walking around. It was hard to find somewhere to eat or get a coffee. And it was weird because a lot of things are shut down. I think this office here was shut down that week just because of security concerns.

**Mike Kearney:**

And was that because—well, security concerns and they were looking for the bomber, right?

**Dic Donohue:**

That too. That too. But the streets were shut down and there was a massive crime scene. And officers from the NYPD and the Port Authority Police Department out in New York, they came out with a hospitality tent in a canteen truck just to make sure that folks working at the scene could get a cup of coffee. They were grilling out starting at 7:00 a.m. in the morning till midnight and making sure that hey, if you drive by here you can get a cup of coffee, you can

get something to eat, you can get water. You can sit down for a couple of minutes.

That solidarity is something that these folks were the same people that lost people in 9/11 and they came up just to lend a hand and show their solidarity and help with their brothers and sisters in blue. And it is just something that I do not think any new stories ever covered. But I just remember them. I remember one of the officers said, "Hey, do you want a beer?" I said, "Man, I would love a beer but I will wait till the end of the shift." And it was just something that...

**Mike Kearney:** It almost brought some levity to a very serious situation.

**Dic Donohue:** It did. It was just one of those small acts of kindness and selfless service that I will remember forever.

**Mike Kearney:** That is great, that is great. So let us move to April 18. So I think it was around 5:00 p.m., but the FBI releases images of the—I always have a hard time. The, Tsarnaev—did I say that—brothers?

**Dic Donohue:** Close enough. It does not matter how anyway.

**Mike Kearney:** It does not—they do not matter so we can butcher their name.

**Dic Donohue:** Right.

**Mike Kearney:** But the alleged bomber. So was that around 5:00 p.m.?

**Dic Donohue:** It was around 5:00 or 5:30. I was basically on the 1:30 to 1:30 shift at that point.

**Mike Kearney:** Oh, so you were doing 12, okay. So you were on shift when—okay, so tell me when you hear this, what is the first thing that goes through your mind? Like holy crap they found them? Or...

**Dic Donohue:** No, finally.

**Mike Kearney:** Finally.

**Dic Donohue:** Because there had been stories in the news. We had been working more or less around the clock and you get text messages, hey this might be the guy—with no basis in reality or just word of mouth. It was like finally something is happening. It was pretty frustrating. There was a lot of community support and outrage and people thanking police officers and kind of community support there. But at the same point, it was really frustrating working that week.

**Mike Kearney:** Did you feel kind of helpless? Like it was, like, I know they are out there but there is nothing we can do until we find them?

**Dic Donohue:** Exactly. I am a patrol officer. I am driving around Boston or I am standing at a T station either waiting for something to happen or waiting for somebody else to catch these guys, basically thinking that they are gone. Because why would somebody stick around after committing this attack, knowing that every agency,

every three-letter agency in the world is—BPD, FBI, ATF, MSP, everybody in the world is looking for these guys and it was really frustrating working that week.

**Mike Kearney:** Why do you think they stuck—I was not even going to go there but you just brought—why do you think they stuck around? Is there any theory that you have?

**Dic Donohue:** It really beats me. Working in the police world, you know the police would be unemployed if criminals did not make mistakes. And they always make mistakes and that was their fatal error sticking around because they did not get out of the state.

**Mike Kearney:** Absolutely. So it is about 5:30. You hear it. Obviously, the major events happen several hours later. So what transpired for you personally from 5:30—if you could just maybe take us through the chronology of events?

**Dic Donohue:** Sure. I had a lot of memory loss after the events so things are hazy in that day. I know I was in a one-man patrol car which is weird that week. I definitely was not the senior man on shift and I was in a one-man patrol car so that was a little strange that week. And I remember grabbing dinner late and texting a buddy.

**Mike Kearney:** So when you say late, like 9:30 or 10:00?

**Dic Donohue:** Yeah, I think it was after 9:00. The reporter or the photo journalist took a picture of me eating, and I was like, oh great. I am taking five seconds to eat something and somebody is taking a picture of me eating. It was basically us and the news downtown.

**Mike Kearney:** Right, it is like here is all this police activity and then here is this policeman sitting having dinner.

**Dic Donohue:** Right, right.

**Mike Kearney:** I mean, come on. Exactly. That 12-hour shift is a long time.

**Dic Donohue:** You got to have a cup of coffee. You got to have water. I remember doing that and then a little while later hearing that there was an incident over at MIT. So MIT is just across the Charles River, right? A stone's throw if you have a good arm. I don't. I would not make it half way. I did make it over the plate when I threw out the pitch at Fenway Park. I want to get that on record.

**Mike Kearney:** Was it over the plate meaning it would have been a strike?

**Dic Donohue:** You can ask David Ross. He is caught in—two World Series' champ—he is a two-time World Series champ and he has also caught a high through from me. It was over the plate. It was high.

**Mike Kearney:** He was a Giant, too, was not he at one point?

**Dic Donohue:** Like five teams, yeah.

**Mike Kearney:** I am not a Giants fan so just for the record too. So anyway, so you get a call from the MIT area.

**Dic Donohue:** Hear about it. Like that is kind of weird.

**Mike Kearney:** What time is this?

**Dic Donohue:** A little bit after 10:30 and something though is a little weird because there is not a lot of shooting in Cambridge. MIT is one of the most prestigious universities in probably the whole world. That is kind of weird, and I have got a friend that works over there. I eventually tell my supervisor and he says, "Go, go, go. Just go. I do not need to hear another word. Just go."

**Mike Kearney:** We do not know what is going on, but get over there.

**Dic Donohue:** So there is train stations around there and we had a lot of help downtown. So there is so many officers and guardsmen and state troopers downtown that it was okay to send a car over and there were several officers there. I found out that a friend of mine from the police academy, a good friend, he lived when I was living in Summerville. He lived basically right down the street from me. So we hung out a lot. We were good friends. He came to my wedding and everything and I found out that he had been killed by the Tsarnaev brothers. He had been shot five times. And I found out he had been killed and from there it was...

**Mike Kearney:** And he was not even engaged; did not they just come up to him? It was almost like, yeah.

**Dic Donohue:** It was a pure ambush. He would not have had a chance to attack. Just sitting there, just a good cop, getting toward the end of his shift and just a terrible, terrible tragedy there.

**Mike Kearney:** And did you hear that right away?

**Dic Donohue:** I did not know it was him until I got there.

**Mike Kearney:** Okay, but you found out that evening.

**Dic Donohue:** Correct.

**Mike Kearney:** That one of your really good friends was killed.

**Dic Donohue:** Yes, I did. And like I said, I do not have too many recollections. I remember being frustrated because we are over there and there is a supervisor and we are like—well, what do we do? There are plenty of transit officers. There are officers from all over. I remember there are blue lights everywhere because it was a tense week and a cop has been killed now. And eventually, basically tell a supervisor that I am partnering up with another cop. We are going to stay on the north side of the Charles River in the Cambridge area and just kind of go on

the hunt because we are not helping anything by standing here. This situation is over.

So we drove around basically Cambridge, we are over by—there was an armed robbery call not too far away, but it was completely unrelated to this. I say it is a little bit of, I would not say hysteria, but a little bit of again confusion, frustration, and I think if you ask me to explain how I felt, there was like antifreeze kind of pumped in through your veins. It was just completely cold and serious, especially, when you find out that your brother officer had been killed. Again it was another one of these situations where you would not think would happen. It is that and two hours later just being outside—basically outside of Harvard Square and hearing that there are officers who need assistance in Watertown and there is a huge shootout going on. So from there, my partner and I...

**Mike Kearney:** How far is it from Cambridge Square to Watertown? Is it like...

**Dic Donohue:** It is probably about two, two and a half miles. I am not extremely familiar with the area. I know where the Watertown Depot is, where there is some MBTA property and a big bus depot. And it is actually not too far from there. So two, two and a half miles depending on how you drive in there. I was with my partner who actually worked more on that side of the Charles River and the Cambridge/Somerville area. So we responded over there to back up the officers and basically it is a huge gun battle going on with the Tsarnaev brothers as homemade explosives through IEDs being thrown at us, I say at officers.

**Mike Kearney:** So when you say there was a bunch of officers, 10, 20? What do you think?

**Dic Donohue:** When it first rolled out it was two Watertown officers and they are basically being shot at. Some of the bullet holes went right through the front windshield, so inches from their face.

**Mike Kearney:** Wow. And what is the distance? Are they close or...

**Dic Donohue:** I think, I mean they were yards and even feet away. You see Sergeant Jeff Pugliese, he was from Watertown, and he was just feet away from Tamerlan Tsarnaev, shooting at each other. And it was basically you can say all hell broke loose. That is basically what it was like. You are in a residential neighborhood, suburbs not that much different from where a lot of us grew up in, in yards and cars and people with small children and this was just before 1:00 a.m. on April 19, 2013, and there are gunshots ringing out through the neighborhood and all officers responding and police cars coming from all different directions. One of those cars was mine. We were at the intersection of Dexter Ave and Laurel Street and I remember a few glimpses. I remember looking back at my partner like, how are we gonna get up there? We have our guns drawn and we were trying to help out the officers, we were trying to go to our right.”

**Mike Kearney:** Are you in your car at this point?

**Dic Donohue:**

Well, we got out. We bailed out of the car at the corner of Dexter and Laurel. We were one of the only cars on that side of the street and we tried to come to the east to help out the guys over there. And it was just like every time we try to get close. There would be gunfire coming our way or there would be a bomb being thrown and one of them went off about 10 yards from us and kind of kicked up some dirt and debris. So it was pretty intense and kind of toward the end of that whole exchange, there was a car going through the intersection, there were people firing from all directions and literally I was basically in a very bad tactical position but by the time you realize it is way too late. I basically sustained a bullet in my right femoral artery and that kind of half second of my life that I remember it was—oh, oh no—for lack of a better term. It was uh-oh.

**Mike Kearney:**

And so obviously you knew at that moment that something happened.

**Dic Donohue:**

You do, and kind of from there it is almost like out of body. I remember falling down and then getting back up and taking a few steps and I do not really remember from there. I motioned to my partner and said I am hit or I am shot, something to that extent. I probably threw in a couple of extra words in there and realizing that the situation is not over necessarily. There was still unexploded ordinance on the ground and we do not know exactly what is going on further down the street that he tackles me and pulls me to safety, basically into somebody's driveway where I am bleeding out.

**Mike Kearney:**

And hopefully this is okay if we go—if you want me to—yeah. So I think I read that you were basically not that you lost consciousness, but that you stopped breathing for 45 minutes or your heart stopped working for 45—really? And you lost how much of your blood?

**Dic Donohue:**

Everything.

**Mike Kearney:**

Everything.

**Dic Donohue:**

So even the first responding officer who was on scene, who had almost been killed himself. He was one of the guys. He came over to me and he said, "Dic, you are going to be okay. You are going to be okay." He saw my eyes basically just open, but I am done. I lost so much blood so quickly. Typically, you have got three to six minutes to live when you have an arterial wound. My artery had been basically destroyed by his bullet and I was bleeding out so quickly. I think there was one person with a tourniquet on scene but it was not that great and the wound was so high up it was impossible to stop. So for about six or eight minutes they were giving me CPR, I was not breathing, my heart was not—they had to pump it to make it work. But I was bleeding out at the same time—so folks were trying to do whatever they could. And one of the officers...

**Mike Kearney:**

And this was all in the context of the firefight still going on, right?

**Dic Donohue:** It is basically wrapping up. Folks are on the chase for the vehicle that got away. Tamerlan Tsarnaev is being handcuffed and thrown into another ambulance. He was still flailing around, alive after multiple gunshots.

**Mike Kearney:** After he got run over, right?

**Dic Donohue:** He got run over, he has been shot and it is amazing what the human body can do.

**Mike Kearney:** Coming back to you, now. You are like, you are a mess.

**Dic Donohue:** Folks are going one direction, another direction and luckily a few of them saw what happened to me and I am basically dying in somebody's driveway. Short story, I got taken into an ambulance. Basically thrown in the back of the ambulance. They said just...

**Mike Kearney:** Get him.

**Dic Donohue:** Drive.

**Mike Kearney:** Get him to the hospital. Yep.

**Dic Donohue:** And by that point I had lost about 90 to 95 percent of the blood in my body. I am out. I am not breathing. They are doing CPR. They said just go. Does not matter about how well the CPR is. You just got to get this guy the heck out of here. So if I had quick care on the ground, some quick thinking to get of there, then the next real decision was where does he go, and luckily the guy that took the wheel of the ambulance took me to the closest hospital and there they patched me up. Although it took a couple of days to wake up and realize what happened.

**Mike Kearney:** Man. I just want to pause for a second. That is incredible. Ninety percent of your—what was the time from when you were shot to when you got to the hospital?

**Dic Donohue:** It was probably 10+ minutes. It was a few minutes on the ground before they got me into an ambulance. Funny enough, the police officer that helped me into—that drove the ambulance, his brother was a firefighter who was in the back working on me and they did not even realize it till they got there because he just jumped in the front and started driving. So you talk about just crazy stories. He shows up at the hospital. What are you doing here? Well, I drove.

Talk about just crazy things that happen, but between the two of them they helped me survive that night and then the tenacious work of the folks at the hospital not giving up on me. Heart stopped for another half an hour inside the hospital and every—a pint of blood they put in me keeps pouring back out and even the doctor had to jump on top of the gurney and put her knee in my groin to wheel me through the hospital up to the operating room.

**Mike Kearney:** Unbelievable.

**Dic Donohue:** If you took all those stories and put them together, it is insane.

**Mike Kearney:** It is crazy. We could go so far more into that story, but let us move to your wake up. So when did you wake up?

**Dic Donohue:** The 21st or 22nd of April, I started to come to. I was sedated, I was in therapeutic hyperthermia, basically in a coma for a couple of days. And I just remember almost being like I am drowning and I can see a little bit of light and I am just trying to push up there and just being full of anger and rage and then opening my eyes. You do not really process anything the first day but realizing that I cannot move too much and there is stuff in my hands, there is something in my throat that I cannot talk, I cannot move that much and just being really angry.

**Mike Kearney:** At that point in time, did you know that you—did you remember enough to say I was shot and that is probably why I am here?

**Dic Donohue:** No.

**Mike Kearney:** No?

**Dic Donohue:** No.

**Mike Kearney:** So you have no clue what you are doing there.

**Dic Donohue:** No clue. No clue. And even when they pulled the breathing tube out and I am awake and trying to sit up, and I'm yelling at people and blaming my wife, telling her to have the baby already. Probably because that was the last time I was in the hospital.

**Mike Kearney:** Your wife did say you were a jokester. I think she even may have said when I spoke to her initially that you made a joke.

**Dic Donohue:** Well, I made some other jokes later.

**Mike Kearney:** We will not go there.

**Dic Donohue:** We used to mess with the hospital staff a few days later. When you do some of the evaluations, they would be like you are not okay. I am like, I am just messing with you. But I woke up really with just full of rage and full of fight. I do not know if I was still in that kind of fight or flight attitude from when the whole gun battle was going on. Maybe that was the case, but I do not know. And then it took me a few days. I had a lot of the good stuff pouring through my veins, some of the good painkillers. So I was a little out of it for a few days. Every time they said, "hey, you were shot," I was like...

**Mike Kearney:** That is such a surreal thing to hear, right?

**Dic Donohue:** I would be like—call my mom, call my brother. I do not believe you. You are lying to me. And I was kind of out of my head. But I did not remember that there was a bombing. I did not remember anything that happened. Doctors are coming in and I would be like—I could not remember months at a time. I think I remembered eventually that I had a kid but I did not remember too much from months back. And even then still, I still had some memory issues even more recently, but it was just something I was kind of left with. So it took a while before I knew what happened that day or that week.

**Mike Kearney:** And your doctors were in disbelief, right? Like how the hell did you make it through? Is that right?

**Dic Donohue:** I think so. I think so. They put everything they had into me that night and Kim gave it to them when they came out to visit in the emergency room, she grabbed the doctor and said, "Hey, we have a six-month-old son at home. You make sure he makes it back home." So they did not have a choice.

**Mike Kearney:** She was going to see that you were going to make it through.

**Dic Donohue:** I would be afraid of that myself. But it is Massachusetts. But even though I was not brought to one of these major trauma centers, we still have some of the best medical facilities in the world. If there is one place to be in a situation like that, it might be here. So I was lucky to have that but they may have been amazed at the recovery and in at least the survival aspects so I am forever grateful to those folks.

**Mike Kearney:** So it obviously sounds like your wife was important in this. What do you think got you through it though? First of all, obviously the doctors got you to a point where you were still alive. But what got you through the challenge just of recovery?

**Dic Donohue:** Man, that is a tough question. So I have had help every single way on the recovery aspect. I think that is important even in making the decision on retiring. Having people by your side to help you make the right decision or see the light sometimes, even if you want to go ahead and make the mistakes. And I think that is certainly part of it, but also being able to look at the challenges you have in front of you, giving things some time in pushing through things every day, putting your heart, your soul, your effort from wake up to going to sleep to recovery to even just getting up and doing one extra thing a day was important. And just having a drive to—you had this will to survive. Obviously, I had something inside of me to survive but that was the easy part. The challenges really came afterwards in figuring out just what am I going to do for the rest of my life or how am I going to get through this hospital stay or how am I going to improve.

**Mike Kearney:** Can you go back to that do one more thing every day? That is an interesting concept, meaning you are not going to achieve significant success in one day. It is something that is going to be over time.

**Dic Donohue:** Mm-hmm.

**Mike Kearney:** But did you consciously think like if I could do, and I am probably putting words in your mouth, but if I can do one more thing today than I did yesterday, that progress is what is going to bring me on this journey. Was that kind of your thinking?

**Dic Donohue:** Absolutely. I think you did see a little bit of it. But when I got out of the hospital, I was in intensive care unit for a month and then I was in a Spaulding Rehab Center for another month doing inpatient rehab, and then when I went back home I was in an incredible amount of pain. I still have a lot of pain in my left leg but it was much, much worse back in 2013. When I went out, basically I had a driver from my department come help me out for a while when I was at home, or I had my mom, which is kind of—sometimes you have to have a little courage to have others help you. I had to call my mom as an adult.

**Mike Kearney:** That is a really difficult thing to do then, right?

**Dic Donohue:** Oh my god. I said, "Mom, I need you to drive me to a doctor's appointment. Kim has to do something today. And then can you drive me to the gym so I can go to the gym for a little while after?" And some of the first steps were, if I can get out of the house for an hour today and not have to go back home to rest my leg, and then tomorrow an hour and ten minutes. And then by the end of the week I can go out of the house for two hours without basically having to take my shoe off, put my foot up and relax. And eventually it turned into—hey, I can make a whole day even in incredible amounts of pain. That was something where it took a lot of time, but it was every day I am going to do just a little bit more to be able to recover to where I wanted to be and then get to there—is a peak, a plateau—there is only so long you can do things, but almost be back to something normal after a while.

**Mike Kearney:** It almost seems like this is inherent in who you are because just going even back to your comments around VMI, I do not know a lot of kids that are raising their hand to go through three and a half years of hell like you went through. And so I am almost wondering if it was like this is just the way it was going to be. It is inherent in who you are and maybe if it was somebody else that they would maybe not have recovered as fast as you did. Do you think that there is any truth to that?

**Dic Donohue:** I think so. The two options were just fail or just be miserable. And folks might think you are miserable or sarcastic, but that is just called being from New England. But some of that I think might be in the New England upbringing because our weather is awful, we complain about our sports' teams regardless if

they win championships, we complain about transportation. And it toughens you up a little bit. And I think option one was driving on, doing the best with what you have regardless of your overall situation and option two is failure.

**Mike Kearney:**

You talked about, and tell me if I have got this right, that fitness played some role in your recovery and to a certain degree your resilience. Is that true?

**Dic Donohue:**

I think so. I do not have the six-pack abs. I have in quite some time put a little weight on this winter, but fitness I am pretty positive helped me survive just the initial shooting. I mean my heart stopped for 40 minutes and being able to live. Losing all that blood and being able to live. But at the same point, even when I was in the hospital, I was at Spaulding, I had been asked to go an extra half an hour in the afternoon or evening when kind of the PT portion dies down and go do the hand bike for an extra couple of minutes or do some pretty pathetic pushups on my knees just to build up some of the strength.

And I think some of that is feeling good physically but also almost in a mental outlet in kind of a refreshing way to—I would not say end your day, but a refreshing way to recharge for the day and feel better. It has always been some kind of my life and even when I was on duty I think it was important for folks how you were having a tough day but you get to go to the gym for a while. Go run for half an hour, go lift weights and then afterwards things get better and I think that definitely worked out for me. I get angry when I cannot workout.

**Mike Kearney:**

So now you know the—and I said this earlier. So the name of the podcast is "Resilient." And when I created the podcast the inspiration was really to find people who embodied what it meant to be resilient in a whole different set of circumstances, whether it is a corporate crisis or leading a company in a challenging time, or going through something like you did. And I actually really love speaking with folks that have analogous stories because I think sometimes the best learnings can be brought into the world that I live in from those. So when you think about resilience, is there anything that comes to the top of your mind using your story that you think maybe other leaders would benefit from? What do you think?

**Dic Donohue:**

Well, personally I do not think that I am any special or anything different than any other person. But what I have had to learn or have been forced to learn is that you have the power inside you, to be resilient, to charge on, to face obstacles you would never, ever think that would stand before you. And you just have to reach down at the inner strength and regardless of the situation. Even being a parent sometimes, you just have to reach down and be like, this is an incredibly tough day, incredibly tough situation. I am going to push through it tomorrow or the next day. The next hour is going to be better. I am going to succeed in this. So you have to have some kind of goal and just drive on regardless of the situation and sometimes you have to step back. Sometimes you are going to fail and you just have to pick up your pieces and push on and just do the best you can every single day.

**Mike Kearney:** One of the things I hear kind of core to that is almost a belief. And sometimes I think our mindset is challenged because our body or circumstances are telling us something different and you almost need to overcome maybe some of those cognitive challenges that you have because it is very easy to say my mind is telling to shut down or not do it, but in fact, actually I can probably do it if I keep pushing forward and it is that core belief. Do you agree with that?

**Dic Donohue:** I do. I agree with that.

**Mike Kearney:** What about do you think support network, and I have been saying that generally, but family, friends, did that play overall in your being able to demonstrate resilience?

**Dic Donohue:** If we had a few days through this podcast, I could do it again and again and again, and I would probably offend people by not telling their stories, but the support network I had, if you think of the words Boston strung, that is what I had. It was incredible, people coming from all over. Our family coming in from all over the country to help out, friends flying in or driving in in those first few days and hours. But the continued support. I think one of the support measures was an officer who is my academy classmate, a good friend of mine was assigned to me seven days a week, 16 hours a day for two months in the hospital and another month at home to help me get everything I needed.

**Mike Kearney:** That was his job?

**Dic Donohue:** His job was to just be by my side, give my wife a ride to visit me, come help out with my kid. That was just one of the things. Obviously, my family played a big part, whether it be my mom or my wife helping me out in the hospital, coming to visit, bringing food, and watching the kids and that, but the community helped out as well. Some of these things—I would not forget about the mayor and the police chief in the city I lived in bringing bags of groceries in. Folks sending baskets with stuff for my kid so he had diapers. It was amazing, amazing community support, and it did not stop then.

And other times when I needed it where I need to ask me a question, especially toward the retirement end, and I hate asking for things but sometimes you just have to. I would say, “hey, I need help.” I am not sure what I am going to do with my life. Can you help me write a resume? Can you help me figure out what I am going to do? And people would sit down even two years after the fact and say I am here for you and do not forget.

**Mike Kearney:** I love stories like this because it really demonstrates in many respects when America—I just sound so patriotic—but when America's at its best. No, but in all sincerity when something like this happens, that is where we show who we truly are.

**Dic Donohue:** And just coming off that, I have talked patriotic and this is probably one of the only things that chokes me up a little bit—was I did not see it myself. But I was

in the hospital. I was in the intensive care unit basically on the brink of death. And the street I grew up on, somebody lined the entire street with small American flags and my parents drive home and see that and I could not imagine what they felt. But you talk about how great the community is, and my first grade teacher coming from across the street to visit my family and bring some flowers over. It was just incredible, incredible community support and outpouring of everything that is great about where we live.

**Mike Kearney:** That is awesome. Wow! You may have just answered it, or maybe this is a good example, but five minutes ago, you said I could do this podcast for days and probably recognize a bunch of people. I kind of put myself in your situation and I go, you know what? There are some people that I know would step up and then there is somebody that maybe I would be surprised of stepping up. Is there somebody? And you do not necessarily need to say their name, but is there somebody like wow, maybe it is your first grade teacher. Like, I was really surprised that they came to show support or do something to help me and my family on this journey.

**Dic Donohue:** Wow! I have boxes and boxes of letters and cards. I received cards from people I have never met, that I probably never will meet, saying thank you for your service. I hope you get better.

**Mike Kearney:** Wow! Did that help you on your...

**Dic Donohue:** Police officers from New Jersey. I got a card from Israel and Australia and Canada. And you are like, what the heck is going on here? And cards...

**Mike Kearney:** How did they know where to send it? Did they send it to your police station?

**Dic Donohue:** It got sent to the police department and it eventually filtered back to me. You see stuff from all corners of the world. My senior mentor from college was training marines from Georgia. Like, the country of Georgia, not Georgia, Georgia. And they signed a flag and sent to me. A flag was flown and set back to me from some I believe it was Army folks. I apologize if it was another armed service that flew over base in Afghanistan for us to have. So just seeing people in outpouring from all over the world you are like completely, completely floored by it.

**Mike Kearney:** I am sure this is going to sound like a silly question. Obviously you would never want to go through an experience like that, but I am sure there is probably some key takeaways or things that you have learned about family, friends, people in general, life as a result of the experience.

**Dic Donohue:** Probably too much to answer but I saw the best in a lot of people after the very worst thing you can think of happens. People being killed and attacked at a fun, family sporting event on Patriot's Day, our holiday, having a friend killed in the line of duty and then almost losing my life myself and then seeing my family rallied together and support me and support each other and friends from all

over. Old friends and new friends helping out and stepping up and being able to enjoy the good times afterwards is really important.

I try to thank everybody as much as I can and every April, I throw some sort of event in getting everybody together whether it be the officers I served with or the officers that helped save my life or the medical staff. Having them together, buying them some drinks and having a good time and enjoying our company now and enjoying the good things that are going to come out of this. That is probably some of the most positive memories I have.

**Mike Kearney:**

It is a nice way to kind of cap off this story of what happened. Let us pivot though to you were resolute. You were like I need to get back to this and you made it back in 2015. Can you just talk about that journey and why it was so important for you to make it back even though physically, like you said, you were in pain and challenged, but that was important to you.

**Dic Donohue:**

Yeah, when I was in the hospital and I kind of laugh a little bit, I told the doctor, "I am going to be back in six weeks. I have a detective rotation I am supposed to do." And he is like, "all right, kid. Yeah." He was laughing. And six weeks later, I am still in the hospital. So I made it, my goal was to get back to the police department. I had to have some other surgeries. They tried some other things to help improve the pain and I did physical therapy and everything I could think of, went to the gym.

I put all the weight I lost back on me and a couple of pounds more and that was my goal to do that and eventually I got to a point where I said okay, I am going to try this out and I was approved for some sort of modified duty and you may have to edit this part but—so I was approved to return in some capacity and I was assigned to a certain unit where I could try to put some of my skills to use. But eventually, the department being a police department and needing full 100% fit for duty officers that I would eventually have to retire because at the point... And today, I am pretty good.

But for me, it is not safe to have an officer that is 80% physically fit to be on the job. Somebody that is in pain all the time or has to take their shoes off for a couple of hours a day because their foot or leg is killing them, or my trip coming up a flight of stairs. It is funny at home but not so funny if you are running after somebody or trying to come to somebody's aid or put another officer's life in danger, that part of the decision to retire came back to how is the department set up for officers that are injured, and in general just fairness to everybody else that is on the force. So I made the decision to retire.

**Mike Kearney:**

And that was about a year later?

**Dic Donohue:**

That was in 2015 as well.

**Mike Kearney:** So how did you get to that—because I am just trying to kind of live vicariously through you? So it is like I want to get back, I make it back and then at some point in time, you said these just are not going to work.

**Dic Donohue:** Right.

**Mike Kearney:** How did you get—what led up to that decision, which must have been pretty damn hard I would imagine. Maybe not.

**Dic Donohue:** I had a feeling things were not—I just had a weird feeling when I went back and it was not exactly what I felt it like it was going to be. Maybe I had romantic notions of what it was going to be like. When I go back I made the decision to retire. For a while I was stressed out about it. Am I going to be a failure? Did I fail myself and everybody else? Did I fail other people? Did I fail the guys that saved me? Did I fail the community by not being able to be at 100% and not healing up and not doing another 20 years as a police officer?

And it took a lot of introspection, it took a lot of people knocking some sense into me. I live with my wife and I am not going to listen to her advice because I know better. But she was right in the long run and I know she will probably listen to this. She was right in the long run but I had to talk to some other folks saying, “hey, look what you have been through.” And it helped talking to other people that had been through similar situations, who had been shot and injured in the line of duty or had been a police officer for a long time or in the military and talking to them and say, “hey, you made it back.”

If it was a day, a minute, an hour you still accomplished that and it took a while to realize that I had accomplished going back to the department and it was not a failure. It was just a stepping stone in a way to somewhere else. And I think where I ended up today making that decision was certainly the right one because I could do a lot for the police in the community in the roles that I am engaged in these days.

**Mike Kearney:** And we will talk about that. You have not totally disengaged from the police community by any means.

**Dic Donohue:** No, not at all.

**Mike Kearney:** But let me ask you a question. When did you ultimately get peace? Like when were you like, you know what? This is the right decision. And the reason why I ask is I am guessing part of the challenge was your identity was a police officer. I think I told you when we talked beforehand that my dad really struggled when he retired and he just tired as a natural course when he got old. But that whole camaraderie in the way police operate, it is a challenge. I am guessing that was part of the challenge coming to peace. But what ultimately got you to that place where you are like you know what? It is the right thing to do.

**Dic Donohue:** It took the course of I would say a few months to get—I would not say get over things. I was hurting every day, but it was just thinking about the decision and thinking about where I am going. It took a couple of months to figure out where I was going and part of I think how I could do it was keeping in contact with some of the guys I work with and still hearing some of the war stories helped out with still feeling like I was part of the team and part of something more.

**Mike Kearney:** Before we move onto what you are doing today—because I really want to jump into that—because it is really interesting, how are you doing health-wise now?

**Dic Donohue:** Well, if I could complain for a while, I...

**Mike Kearney:** That is what we are here for.

**Dic Donohue:** Yeah, sorry. I can vent. I have been left with just basically I think neuropathic pain from my left foot and left leg, basically from the knee down. But mostly in the foot—my foot is killing me basically.

**Mike Kearney:** Like, even right now?

**Dic Donohue:** Twenty-four/seven I am in pain in my foot. I have some I would say some balance issues as well and I have memory loss from previous to the incident. So I still have some memory and cognitive issues in handwriting that I am left with from traumatic brain injury and I do not remember my son's first Christmas, which is kind of weird, so that just kind of illustrates some of my memory loss and chunks of memory that are gone. But I try to just live through those and do as much as I can. I do not run too much anymore because that is basically one of my major restrictions. I ran in high school, I ran in college, I did it for fun afterwards.

And that was part of my life and lifestyle and that is one of those other things. I was a cop and I was a runner. I am no longer a cop, I am no longer a runner, but I have had to adapt otherwise. If I go to the gym, it makes my leg hurt but I think that if I did not go to the gym, if I did not do anything to maintain my physical fitness, I would not have mental stamina as well. So I do what I can and I still have enough strength in my legs to chase after a four-year-old when he gets away from me so that is very important.

**Mike Kearney:** He will get faster.

**Dic Donohue:** He is fast already.

**Mike Kearney:** So let us talk about what you are doing today. So you are a motivational speaker, you are working with law enforcement. Can you just maybe fill in some of the gaps? Talk about what your life looks like now, what you do?

**Dic Donohue:** After I decided to retire, I sat down with a couple of folks, one of them worked in corporate recruiting. He helped me get a resume and talk to some people and I eventually almost settled on—"hey, I want to teach." So I talked to some

people at local universities, I had some sit-downs. He was kind of this community network—“Hey, I will definitely sit down with you. Why do not you talk to him as well or talk to her. Here are some programs, here are some things to think of,” and I got picked up to teach a class at a local college right here.

And I was teaching in criminal justice and that eventually—one thing leads to another. So I have two pathways. One of them was the teaching and I ended up enrolling at the University of Massachusetts Lowell in the PhD program and I just finished my first year. I have a lot of work in front of me. Passed the preliminary exam by the skin of my teeth.

**Mike Kearney:** Congratulations.

**Dic Donohue:** So I am looking at what I can do in the academic world, but on the side, kind of, through speaking at an event in talking to people I met Bob Delaney. He is a former police officer. He worked undercover in New Jersey. After he got out, he worked undercover with the Mob and after he got out, he became an NBA referee and worked his way up to the VP referee. So he had that change as well.

**Mike Kearney:** I thought I had heard that name. That is interesting.

**Dic Donohue:** So I talked to him and he introduced me to somebody else. I ended up going to conference, get introduced to somebody else and I get picked up for a Bureau of Justice assistant's program called the Valor Initiative speaking to things about officer safety, health, wellness, and I teach officer survival and a resilience portion. So I just finished doing one of those trainings last week because I had the summer off, so I have two paths that I do now. I speak mostly with the valor program talking about my personal situation, my strengths, my failures, the things my family did for me, the things I could have done better for my family beforehand and the challenges that I have had on the side as well. I am a student so...

**Mike Kearney:** It is incredible.

**Dic Donohue:** I am extremely busy. And then with my schedule I get to spend time with the kids and what I have learned over time is in fact when I was working 40—I never worked a 40-hour week as a cop. Sixty—60-hour weeks that I should have spent some more time with the people around me and now I have had that opportunity. So even being out injured or out-doing physical therapy and not doing as much as I thought I could, I had an incredible opportunity to spend time with the people I otherwise would not have been seeing on a daily basis. And you take a lot of that good stuff with you when you are in a bad situation.

**Mike Kearney:** Well, and I would imagine as a result of everything that has happened to you, those moments in your life probably are even more precious than—obviously, they were precious before but they probably mean more now.

I would probably characterize to a certain degree not only you, a formal student, but you are kind of a student life now to a certain degree. I do not know if you agree with that or not. But is there is anything that you have learned when you do these training programs from other people?

**Dic Donohue:** It was funny. I talked to a citizen's academy group and a gentleman came up to me afterwards.

**Mike Kearney:** Can I ask a dumb question? What's a citizen's academy group? What does that mean?

**Dic Donohue:** It was for the FBI citizen's academy. They go through a training program with the FBI. It is just community members and they go through and they learn about the FBI. They actually get to go to a firearms range too, so they get to have some fun with it.

**Mike Kearney:** Okay, I got it.

**Dic Donohue:** And they learn about the FBI and I gave a talk afterwards and a guy came up to me and he says, "Hey, how are you doing? I used to be with the NYPD. I am retired." I am like, "Oh, congratulations. You made it over the hump." He goes, "No, I did it like you. I got shot in the femoral artery." And he goes, "You know, just when you think you have it bad, somebody's got it worse." I just laughed and I go, "You know what? There are." I know so many other people that have been injured worse than I have and have been through other situations.

It does not have to be some shooting or stabbing incident but just other things that happen in life and you learn from them and from their trials and there are so many other people that have had it so much harder and maybe come up on top. But I can just say wow, and look at their story and say look at the impact. Look at the difference they have made. Look at the changes they have made in their life. That would be something I could emulate. By the way, I got to go grab your phone number because if I have a question or a challenge I am going to call you up.

**Mike Kearney:** I do not know if you agree with this or not but it almost feels like there is a certain sense of gratitude meaning everybody's dealing with some sort of a devil. Others potentially have it worse but it sounds like what that gentleman was saying or what you learned was to be grateful you got it bad, but to be grateful for what you got to a certain degree.

**Dic Donohue:** I think you have to be. You have to be. You could be miserable or you could push on. Drive on through those challenges and try to be as happy as you can and just do the best you can every day when you wake up.

**Mike Kearney:** I think that is becoming a theme for you. That is what I like about you. So how do you see your life unfolding over the next several years/10 years?

**Dic Donohue:** Well, you know if you had asked me that in 2010, I would have said I am going to do 23 years at the MBTA Transit Police Academy, I got to move up through the ranks, I am going to be a sergeant, lieutenant, deputy chief, and chief. However, those things get thrown out the window...

**Mike Kearney:** And then retire.

**Dic Donohue:** Yeah, then retire happy and healthy, move to Florida, something like that. No. You never know. You never know. It is tough to see. The first thing I like to do is obviously graduate from a PhD program and...

**Mike Kearney:** How long is that program?

**Dic Donohue:** Well, it depends on how long my dissertation is.

**Mike Kearney:** Well, you get three and a half years for your—I think it was three and a half years of VMI. So are you going to accelerate it? I am just messing with you.

**Dic Donohue:** It depends on how long I can draw it out. We will see here. That is a big challenge in front of me but there are more important things right in front of me and that is the health and upbringing of my children and that is really important. So I want to see them grow and succeed. The number one is see them grow and succeed and support them in whatever they want to do. So that is focus number one. Personally, I would like to finish my doctorate, possibly get back into academia, continue with some of the things I have been doing with the Valor Program and make an impact with officers' safety and hopefully contribute to a more safe police culture, but also improving community college. It is a challenging time for police officers and communities and there is a lot of work to do and hopefully I can just play a small part of that equation and not use my experience, but use my experience in the things I have learned from other people to make a difference there.

**Mike Kearney:** I guess one last question before we get into some of the rapid fire closing questions and that is when you are doing your presentation, so a lot of it sounds like it is to the police community, have you started to think about, because I think there is a lot there that even though your story has to do with law enforcement and recovery but that could be valuable to kind of nonpolice communities. Have you ever gone out in that area or something that you have thought about?

**Dic Donohue:** I have. I have spoken to a few groups, some local groups. I actually spoke to Deloitte Boston back a few years ago, the Boston office. What I sort of learned I think can translate to the business or even your personal growth are surviving and some of the key things that are preparing for situations, but preparing to be able to change those when the situation changes. So it is more of the preparation and then adaptability. So I had my plan A. You just heard it a minute ago. But what about plan B, plan C? Am I going to be steadfast and say this is

the only thing I am going to do? This is the only way I am going to succeed? The answer is NO.

There is always a plan B or plan C. And you might find out that plan B or plan C might be better than your plan A the whole time. And I think over the course of that it comes back around that adaptability, it comes back around to that resilience and figuring out and just pushing on to the hard situations, digging deep for that courage to be able to adapt, to be able to realize your failures, to be able to realize your success is an ultimately—you will probably find more successes than failures and hopefully end up somewhat happy with the end result.

**Mike Kearney:** It is funny, we interviewed Mallory Weggermann. The name probably does not mean anything. But she is a Paralympic swimmer. And she went paralyzed from the waist down when she had an epidural shot—because of back pain, went wrong. So now she is a swimmer. She has achieved some great things but she said in some respects the fact that this happened I have a better life, which is not what anybody would think. But she says because I have been exposed to so many things that I never would have, I have become somebody that I do not think I ever would have. So it is interesting. Sometimes adversity and maybe taking kind of a right turn when it was absolutely not your choice can create a rich life. I do not want to say a better life, but a rich life.

**Dic Donohue:** Other than the leg pain, I think there is more good than bad out of this. My wife Kim actually said a quote back when she was interviewed back in 2015 on CBS news that there is more I could probably memorize the quote by now because I usually end my presentation with it. And sometimes you see some of these cops with tears in their eyes. It is amazing. There is more of a silver lining in this than anything bad that has come out of it. And when Dic is out of the ICU when he feels better that this will ultimately be the best thing that has ever happened to us.

**Mike Kearney:** And she said that while you were in the hospital?

**Dic Donohue:** I do not know how she knew it. I was probably in so much pain and so drugged up I was like I do not know what she was talking about. But I think she was right. And then the situation and what the kind of cards you are dealt with, that's your hand. And you got to live with it and just push it on and enjoy every day, every moment the small victories. When you finally take a vacation or break from everything it feels so much better.

**Mike Kearney:** So a couple final questions. So the Tsarnaev—God, I can never going to be able to say that name. But they were pretty young at the attack. What would you say to them? And you may have had a chance to say something to Dzhokhar, but what would you say to them if you saw them?

**Dic Donohue:** Well, when I was at the trial back a couple of years ago now, it was a pretty long trial. You heard some graphic things about people you know and for me it was pretty personal hearing about Officer Collier, hearing—seeing the officers that were almost killed that I have become friends with on the stand. I was not called to testify or anything but I had the opportunity to give a victim impact statement, and I kind of mulled over it for a long time.

**Mike Kearney:** Was this after he was convicted?

**Dic Donohue:** Correct.

**Mike Kearney:** So kind of presentencing.

**Dic Donohue:** At the sentencing day, they give you a chance to talk. It does not affect—I believe the sentence is already determined at that point but they let you say a few words, and I was mulling it over for a while and I said, do I need to do this? How are people going to perceive me if I get up there? What am I going to say?

**Mike Kearney:** When you say how are people going to—meaning like, I may be grandstanding or...

**Dic Donohue:** Exactly. For a while I minimized as a police officer and I do not know if it is something inside of me. I minimized my injuries compared to other people. There are people that lost their lives. There are people that lost family members in this trial. Do I need to stand up and say this is what you did to me? Is it childish? I could not put a word on it. But I was like, do I really need to do this?

**Mike Kearney:** Do you know what common theme that I have heard with a lot of people? I think there is a lot of humility.

**Dic Donohue:** I have had to learn that. Even calling mom for a ride to the doctor is...

**Mike Kearney:** No, but you are humble. I almost feel like I do not want to make this about me is what I hear you saying.

**Dic Donohue:** That is it. You hit the nail on the head. I did not want to make this day, this moment about me. Because there were other people—there were hundreds of other people that were involved in this and I feel like I am just a small part of everything.

**Mike Kearney:** You have me on the edge because now I am really curious what the heck you said to him.

**Dic Donohue:** Well, I wrote out some notes and I actually went and spoke after Sean Collier's sister spoke. My friend's sister went up and talked and I was sitting next to her. And I do not get that worked up or that nervous about speaking in public or anything like that. And I went up and it was one of the only times where Dzhokhar Tsarnaev actually turned around and looked at people. He would never look at people in the stand or rarely would make any kind of contact, and

locked eyes with me and I probably got taken back to 12:51 a.m. on April 19, 2013, and I do not know how I maintained my composure, my professionalism.

**Mike Kearney:** So you are giving your...

**Dic Donohue:** I am trying to give it.

**Mike Kearney:** You are giving your speech and he is looking directly at you and you are saying it is one of the first times he has engaged at that level with anybody.

**Dic Donohue:** Correct.

**Mike Kearney:** Wow.

**Dic Donohue:** And I just remember I get a little red and just remembered almost every muscle in my body getting tense. And my wedding ring did not fit. It was just my hands were just swollen and red. And every kind of bit of rage was going through me but at the same point, I am in a professional courtroom.

**Mike Kearney:** Right.

**Dic Donohue:** I am representing my department and my community so I was restrained by that because you wanted to have the human emotions but at the same point you have to be rational. The court is dealing with him. I delivered a statement. I let him know that the impact this had on my family, on my police department, on my community, on the relationships I have had with other people. How his trying to kill police officers ended up with my life changing, the people's lives changing around me and he was to blame for this and for the horrific acts that were committed on Boylston Street not too far from where we were sitting and continuing through Cambridge and Watertown a few days later.

**Mike Kearney:** Did he display any emotion at all or...

**Dic Donohue:** I did not see any emotion out of him but locked eyes and I probably displayed a little bit more emotion. In fact, there was somebody in the hallway and they said, "Dic, I could hear you through the double set of doors," that that was how loud I guess I got by the end of that statement. So it was emotional. I was probably at the very top you could get on the food chain of human emotions at that point in time.

**Mike Kearney:** So where do you stand in terms of kind of the way that you look at him and even his deceased brother. He was given the death penalty, right? And obviously that will take quite some time. But now when you reflect on him, what goes through your mind?

**Dic Donohue:** The only thing that I would like at this point in time would be some real remorse. There was an apology at the trial but just hearing it, it sounded more...

**Mike Kearney:** Hollow or...

**Dic Donohue:** Insanity almost. I could not think of a good term for it. But Tsarnaev's statement at the trial did not seem to hold any real weight, any real sincere apology. I think that would be a first step. And the second step would be I would like to know everything that happened from the time you or your brother became radicalized to the time the whole thing finished. Mindset, influences, everything else that happened around you, who else helped that? Who else helped with the training? So incidents like this cannot happen in the future. That is probably the only thing more positive that could come from this is knowing everything else around it, the whole story so that things like this do not happen again.

**Mike Kearney:** When you think of somebody who is resilient, is there somebody that jumps to the top of your mind? Other than, listen, I will put you at the top of the list so we can take you off. Who comes to top of mine for you?

**Dic Donohue:** I do not have one person. I have met so many people probably through my situation that I would say have been resilient. I could range it from—this is a tough one, my goodness.

**Mike Kearney:** Well let me rephrase it. So thinking about all those people...

**Dic Donohue:** I mean, I have met Malala Yousafzai. I mean, you talk about somebody that has been resilient and has taken a situation where you are almost killed and you need to travel around with armed security and you are trying to make a difference in the world that is one person you are like, oh, my God. That is really top of the food chain but you see, and I have heard so many different stories of people that have had to overcome challenges in their life or have moved to this country and started businesses and succeeded from nothing. It does not have to be a challenge of being in a deadly encounter, but just folks that have succeeded and made something out of little. It is incredible.

**Mike Kearney:** Is there a common thread do you think that you have seen with some of these people?

**Dic Donohue:** Hard work.

**Mike Kearney:** Hard work?

**Dic Donohue:** Hard work. That is I think just the cornerstone.

**Mike Kearney:** Well, Dic, this has been fantastic. I appreciate your time. This is one of those stories where I just go I cannot believe I am talking to the guy that went through all this. But I think the most important thing, at least what I am taking away, is all the learnings that I think you have shared with us. So I appreciate your time and for really kind of going to some dark places, so thank you.

**Dic Donohue:** Thank you. Appreciate the opportunity to come in and share my story.

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**Mike Kearney:**

Wow, I want to pause for a minute. What an incredible conversation. What an incredible human being. Dic, when you are listening to this, thank you for your time; it means a whole lot.

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