

FINISH LINE

A DOCUMENTARY PLAY ABOUT THE 2013 BOSTON MARATHON



PHOTO CREDIT: PAUL WARDITA



“It’s a story with particular heft for Bostonians, of course. But it’s also a story with universal appeal, about the strength of the human spirit.” – **The Boston Globe**

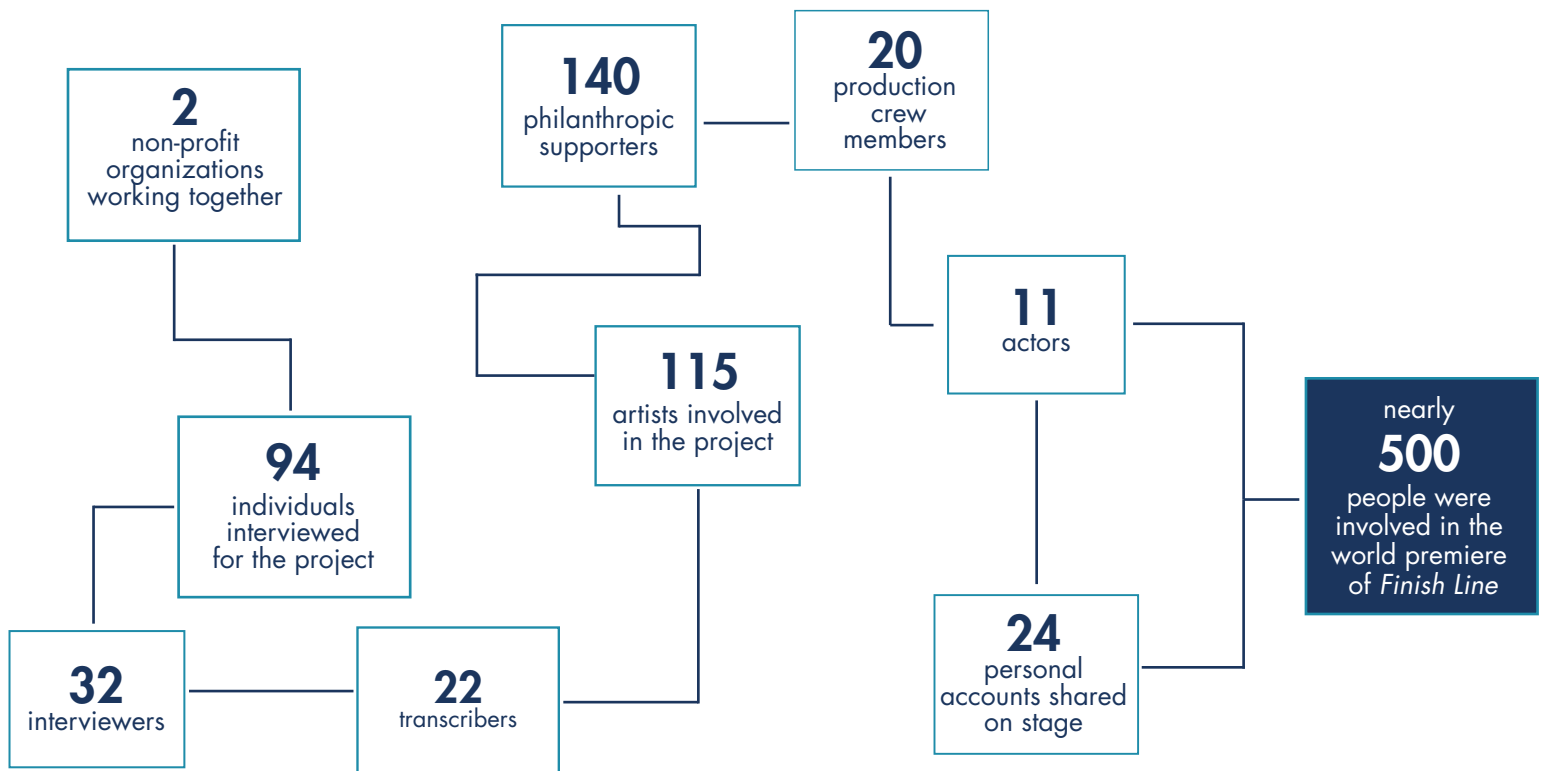
ABOUT FINISH LINE

From March 15-26, 2017, the world premiere of *Finish Line: A Documentary Play About the 2013 Boston Marathon* was presented by the Boch Center in association with Boston Theater Company at the Boch Center Shubert Theatre.

Finish Line brings a story of recovery, resilience, and determination center stage. Through a transcript created verbatim from dozens of interviews, *Finish Line* uses powerful firsthand accounts to show how a community came together to heal and grow stronger in the wake of the 2013 Boston Marathon bombings. It does not focus on the act of terror itself but rather on the people whose lives were impacted. Directed and co-created by Joey Frangieh and co-created by Lisa Rafferty, the documentary style production features interviews from survivors, runners, doctors, police officers, spectators, journalists, clergy, and students. These include Liz Norden, mother of two sons injured in the bombings, news anchor Maria Stephanos, Massachusetts General Hospital trauma surgeon Dr. David R. King, Boston Police Commissioner William Evans, 1976 Marathon winner Jack Fultz, and *Boston Globe* photographer John Tlumacki, among many others.

A team began interviews for *Finish Line* in March 2015. In total, 94 individuals were interviewed for the project. After holding seven workshops, preview performances of *Finish Line* were presented in a 50 seat conference room in April 2016 and received an overwhelming response from audiences. Over the next year, Boston Theater Company and the Boch Center worked together to conduct more interviews, make changes to the script, hold auditions, design a set, and much more that led to the world premiere of *Finish Line* at the 1,500 seat Shubert Theatre in March 2017.

FINISH LINE BY THE NUMBERS



PRODUCTION: CHARACTERS & SET DESIGN

Characters:



- Liz Norden** – Mother of two sons injured in the bombings
- Paula McLaughlin** – Coordinator of Boston Marathon charity team and wife of Boston cop
- Carol Downing** – Runner whose daughters were injured as marathon spectators
- Maria Stephanos** – News anchor who was on the scene
- Erika Brannock** – Marathon spectator, pre-school teacher from Maryland, amputee
- Dr. David R. King** – MGH surgeon who ran the marathon and then went into hours of surgery
- Harry McEnery** – Emergency room technician from Beth Israel and first responder
- Richard Webster** – Avid Boston Marathon runner
- Justin Stratton** – EMT and first responder at the scene of the marathon bombings
- Dr. Jane Montgomery** – Doctor who ran the race and then ran into the crime scene to help
- Brad Jensen** – Runner
- John Tlumacki** – Boston Globe photographer who was on the scene that day
- Lee Ann Yanni** – Marathon spectator who was injured
- Officer Keith Franklin** – BPD officer

Set design:

Finish Line runs 90 minutes without intermission. The simplistic unit set is intended to support the words being spoken and the stories being shared. 11 actors delivered the verbatim accounts of 24 individuals on a platform stage with a backdrop of more than 1,100 lightbulbs. These lightbulbs are a reminder that as an individual (one lightbulb) we are strong and bright, but as a community (hundreds of lightbulbs) we are so much stronger and brighter.

FINISH LINE SCRIPT EXCERPTS



Finish Line is a story about the strength of the human spirit. It does not focus on the act of terror that occurred on April 15, 2013 and in the days following. Instead, it tells real stories of recovery, healing, and community using the verbatim words of those individuals who were involved.

Nancy Taylor: There is something very, very special about the Boston Marathon. It is the world's oldest, peaceful, international competition.

John Tlumacki: Within not even two minutes, everybody who was a victim, was being helped. And most of the first responders were not EMTs or firefighters they were the volunteers who work at the Marathon they wear yellow jackets they were the ones who were lending, you know first aid right away.



Officer Franklin: We've always read and heard in the news about bombings overseas, London, Europe, the Middle East. Never thinking that it could happen here in the homeland. But after what happened on 9/11 and Marathon Monday it makes you realize that there are in fact radical groups here in the US and the likelihood of something happening again is eminent and real...and it makes you appreciate life every day.

Erika Brannock: It's just...it's incredible how one event can...change your life for the better, even though it's a tragedy. Um, and bring so much good into your life. 'Cause I think sometimes people forget that, that there can be good that comes out of tragedy.



Carol Downing: We're moving forward, but it's been...tough. Um. I think we're more compassionate since Boston. And um...just paying it forward when we can.

Maria Stephanos: I'm a girl who grew up here. I have run that Boston Marathon. I have crossed that finish line. I have covered that marathon since I was radio reporter in my twenties. That is our marathon. Those are our moments right there that define this great city. And they were changed that day. It was all changed that day. From the darkness... comes so much light, I think, it made us, stronger as a city.



Richard Webster: Love is not a feeling. Love is an action. The response of...so many people to say...to push back against evil. And...our world needs a lot of that.



Liz Norden: Truly, I mean um, you know for somethin' that was so bad – and it was bad, I mean it was probably the darkest day of our lives – it was just amazin' how really nice people really are. I thank God every day, because, for all intents and purposes, it could have been different.

NBC BOSTON "BEHIND THE FINISH LINE"

Through a unique media partnership with NBC Boston, two television specials were created: a 30 minute "Behind the Finish Line" segment and a 60 minute segment titled "Finish Line – A Special Preview". You can view the 30 minute behind the scenes special below.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=48JiGpYC-dQ>



Behind The Finish line : A Documentary Play

RISE – ORIGINAL SONG FROM FINISH LINE

The play concludes with a dramatic original song called RISE written by Joey Frangieh with orchestrations by Doug Hammer, Nile Hawver and Nate Tucker. Listen to the cast perform RISE below.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FURrv-VeBX4&feature=youtu.be>



RISE – Original Song from Finish Line: A Documentary Play About the 2013 Boston Marathon

FEEDBACK

Mr. Joe Spaulding and The Boch Center,

I cannot express to you how grateful I am that you took a chance on Joey and Lisa and their incredible show. I have been interviewed for many projects since the bombing, but nothing has told my story and so many others so perfectly. Coming up on the four-year anniversary; a mixture of emotions come up for me and so many other survivors, but what Joey and Lisa put together helped to lessen our fear of being forgotten about.

Seeing the show on the final night was truly magical for me. Not only did I get to surprise the cast by being there, but also was accompanied by many members of my incredible care team from Beth Israel. I watched the show holding two of my friends' hands tightly, laughing at my mother's jokes and beaming with pride seeing how perfectly Amie Lytle got my words and me. I heard myself in every word she said and felt every emotion I've felt over the last four years.

Many things stuck out to me that made this show more powerful than anything that has been done on the bombing. First, the fact that our own words were said was a brilliant idea. Nothing is more powerful than a survivor's own words and the emotions connected to those words. Second, the simplicity of the stage and the props was utterly genius. Having suspended light bulbs brought your focus exactly where it should be. I have been to shows before where there are so many things happening on stage that I have missed lines and actions from the characters I should be paying attention to. For someone with ADD this was so helpful keeping my focus and also allowed the words to speak louder. Finally, the fact that there was no explosion and everything went silence and the lights went down was complete perfection. I remember telling Joey after the show that the silence was so much more powerful than any noise he could have done to try and recreate the explosion. I felt at that moment that the audience experienced exactly what I had when the bomb went off. Nothing. Silence is a much more powerful noise than any other. Imagine not being able to hear children laughing or birds chirping on a nice spring day. Doesn't that make you think more when you can't hear those things than being able to hear them?

I believe so much in this show for many more reasons than I could ever put down on paper. This show has shown a light on this event in a way never imagined before. I think the show would do amazingly well on the road and in other cities, Baltimore especially. The number of friends, family and acquaintances that have told me how much they wish they could see it is incredible. They have heard my story before but never like this and never have they heard so many of the other untold stories in this show.

I know this incredible show would touch many more lives and show them how so many have come out of an event like this in unique and beautiful ways.

Sincerely,

Erika Brannock
(Finish Line interviewee, survivor)



Dear Mr. Spaulding,

With the close of Finish Line, I am writing to wholeheartedly thank you for the myriad of gifts you gave to me and to each and every member of the company over the past few months. Actually, it is hard to know where to begin to sufficiently express my gratitude. First and foremost, a huge thank you for your belief in this project, Mr. Spaulding. To say that it has been a highpoint of my career so far would be an understatement. Your unwavering support of Joey and the entire team (both onstage and off) is a testament to the artistry that the Boch Center represents and espouses. From day one, you gave us a safe and comfortable place to explore this tough subject matter and infuse it with the hope and expressive force that it needed. You and the staff spared no expense whatsoever to ensure that this was a positive experience all around and it meant so much to me and my fellow company members, I assure you. Your sublime hospitality from day one of rehearsals to opening night and right through to our emotional closing reception made this an extraordinary experience in every way. I am not exaggerating when I say that I wear my Boch Center cap with pride as I cherish the memories of this phenomenal experience. Thank you for everything, Mr. Spaulding. It has been an honor to work for such a class-act and a first class operation.



With deep gratitude,

Danny Bolton
(Finish Line actor)

“The way Joey and Lisa have weaved these stories together, showing the horror and confusion from multiple vantage points, is something distinct, something powerful, and something that will touch anyone who sees it, as it did for me.”
– **David Abel, Pulitzer Prize-winning Boston Globe journalist, Interviewer**

“Being at the finish line in 2013 was the scariest moment of my life. When I was asked to participate in the project, I was a bit apprehensive knowing that I would have to relive that awful day. But in the end, doing the interview was therapeutic. I was amazed at the ability of the director and actors to capture the interviewees.”

– **Paula McLaughlin, Charity Coordinator,
Hale Reservation and Finish Line Interviewee**

“Finish Line gives an empowering voice to Boston Marathon bombing survivors from all walks of life. This documentary theatre production helps preserve a priceless piece of Boston’s rich history.”

– **Lynn Julian, Boston Marathon Survivor
and Finish Line Interviewee**



QUOTE FROM JOE SPAULDING

"I've been the President & CEO of the now Boch Center for over 30 years. We have presented thousands of shows during that time across all genres. I can say without a doubt that Finish Line has been one of the most rewarding projects I have ever been a part of. The concept of documentary theatre is so unique and special, and seeing how this play brought our community together to continue the healing process from the marathon bombings was incredible. Everyone walked out of the theatre truly blown away by what they had experienced, and I'm beyond proud to have presented such an impactful production."



- Josiah A. Spaulding Jr., *President and CEO, Boch Center*

FINISH LINE REVIEWS & PRESS HIGHLIGHTS

"It's a story with particular heft for Bostonians, of course. But it's also a story with universal appeal, about the strength of the human spirit." – The Boston Globe

"Finish Line is a profound examination of how a community endures tragedy. It is both raw and sensitive without falling into the easy traps of melodrama and exploitation. You will leave the theater certainly with pride for Boston, but more importantly with a faith in humankind." – Jared Bowen, Arts Editor, WGBH

"Emotionally, if not dramatically, fulfilling" – Boston Globe

"The soul-inspiring message comes through so clearly in these verbatim stories" - Cape Cod Times

"What is immediately stunning is the simple poetry of natural, everyday speech, intimate and unadorned, and the power of the real."

– Joyce Kulhawik



FINISH LINE REVIEWS & PRESS HIGHLIGHTS



“It re-opens a wound with an eye toward healing and more than that, the power of compassion.” – Joyce Kulhawik

“Together, all these people crafted a moving, sometimes wrenching, but ultimately hopeful remembrance of that day that brought terror to Boston, that showed both the worst and the best of humanity.” – Cape Cod Times

“It’s a piece of theater that could comfort and inspire many trying to find the good in today’s world despite violent acts and incendiary division.” – Cape Cod Times

“Stellar ensemble of selfless actors who give themselves to their characterizations without ego.” – Broadway World

“Important, thoughtful piece of theater” – Broadway World

“It filled me with pride and gratitude to be some small part of the community where this all took place”
– Broadway World

“Evil doesn’t win. Love triumphs. That is the essence of “Finish Line,” an honest and raw documentary play about Boston’s darkest day.” – Patriot Ledger

“Frangieh and Rafferty never veer from their theme of unity.” – Patriot Ledger

“...highlighting the heroism, resilience, and determination of dozens of survivors of the 2013 Boston Marathon bombings. Their remarkable tales, told in their own words, have gone largely unnoticed – until now.”
– NBC News



AUDIENCE FEEDBACK

Amazing, powerful, moving and inspiring performance.

This was amazing, very touching and respectful to the survivors, victims and families.

After this goes to Broadway it needs to be revived/produced continuously for educational and historical needs across the country.

You are very brave to tell these stories - thank you.

You did a wonderful job respectfully retelling the personal stories of survivors, family, and first responders. I laughed. I cried. I loved it. Thank you for giving us all a voice and helping those lucky not to be there [have] an idea how it happened.

It makes me feel that humans are so amazing and so helpful and so resilient. It makes you feel hopeful.

Thank you for doing this production. I really can't thank you enough.

CREATIVE TEAM

Joey Frangieh, *Director and Co-Creator of Finish Line*

- Director, playwright and projection designer
- Artistic Director of Boston Theater Company
- Broadway, *On Your Feet: the story of Emilio and Gloria Estefan* and *Allegiance* (assistant projection designer)
- Projection designer for Boston Theatre Critics Association
- Guest lecturer for the Shakespeare Society at Wellesley College
- Panelist in the "Young Alumni Success Stories" at Northeastern University

Lisa Rafferty, *Co-Creator of Finish Line*

- Producer, writer and teacher
- Internationally known for her 4 comedies in the MOMologues series
- Published pieces in *The Boston Globe*, *Wicked Local*, and *The New York Times*
- Member of Dramatists Guild, and the Stage Directors and Choreographers Society

Josiah A. Spaulding Jr., *President and CEO, Boch Center*

- Responsible for the region's leading nonprofit performing arts center for the last 30 years
- Founder of performing arts education programs
- Arts and cultural leader who initiated the restoration of the Wang Theatre