London native proud of citizens' response to tragedy

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In a telephone interview Friday he described the first few moments after the bombings.

"There was about 30 minutes of almost panic," he said. "Some people hadn't made it into work yet and we were trying to find out if they were OK. At first it was more confusion than panic, really. All the reports coming in were so erratic. We were all watching the news, listening to the radio, checking the Internet to try and gather information. There was a lot of confusion."

He described the walk back to his Bloomsbury home Thursday evening as "eerie".

"The closer I got to home, the closer I got to where one of the incidents happened. There was a lot of pedestrian traffic, more roads were blocked off and there was a definite media presence there, with the satellites and all. The closer I got to the heart of it, it was really bizarre. All the people passing by, you'd hear comments and pieces of comments like 'Then I heard screaming', or 'Then I heard an explosion'. That's when it really started sinking in."

Mr. Campbell spent the evening at his local pub, where many shared their experiences from the day.

"There was a lot of big tough Englishmen hugging each other, which you don't normally see," he said.

"But Londoners are really kind of used to this sort of thing. With the history of IRA bombings, you get used to seeing a tube train station cordoned off. And around the city of London there are no garbage bins on the street because one could be used to store a bomb. As a Canadian, that's very strange. You can't just throw something away, you have to hold on to it and you're reminded why.

"In the Second World War, London was bombed quite heavily and many people still remember that quite well. There's an old couple at the pub that still recount the war. Londoners have been through that, they understand tragedy and are good at coping with (it)."

Mr. Blundell lived through two IRA bombing campaigns on the streets of London and agreed the people of his city are used to coping with terrorist violence.

"I don't think anything prepares you for actually being there, but Londoners are certainly used to this kind of thing," he said.

Now, more than ever, he is proud of his hometown.

"They're not going to give in to these guys, that's for sure," he said.

"I'm very proud of the way they're handling it. Of course, I wish it hadn't happened, but I'm proud of how they're coming through it. Sometimes you cringe when something is said about where you're from or what they've done. Today my three-year-old is wearing a London T-shirt and I'm saying, 'Hold your head up high girl, it's a good thing.'"

JASON CAMPBELL: Newmarket native, who lives near Kings Cross station, described scene as "eerie".

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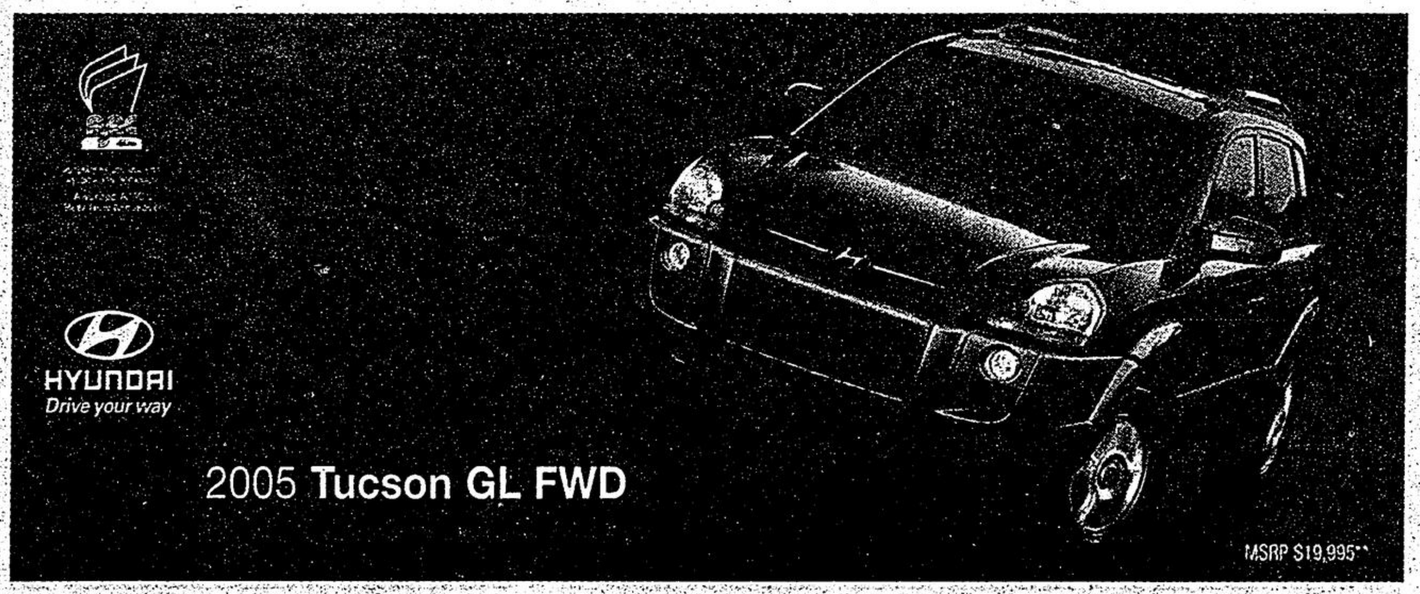

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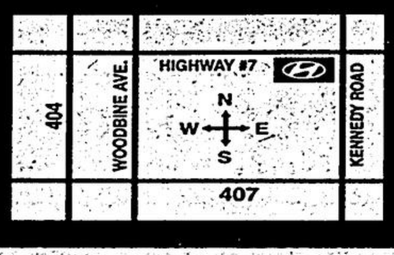

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