

Old wrinkled woman probably over 90-years-old: Oh, my ginger! That's a long way. (Laughs.) Well, I tell you, go right down here (nodding toward Cambridge Street) to the esplanade. Follow that to the esplanade. Follow that to the left, along the river. You'll see signs. Follow that to Arlington Street. That's where the Gardens area.

Oh, they're like nothing you ever saw. (Laughs.) Now they're something out of this world. Awful now. Trees, and grass -- but no flowers! (Laughs.)

Oh, with your long legs, about fifteen minutes ... or ten. (Laughs.)  
(Leaving, turns and, with a wave, says:) Good luck.

Nurse: Oh. Are you walking or driving? Well, go right at that stoplight (pointing to Cambridge Street). Go to the traffic circle and go left on Charles Street. Just follow Charles and you'll run right into it.

You'll cross Beacon Street. The Common will be on your left, and the Public gardens on you right. They're like two big parts, or one. Charles Street goes down the middle: the Common on the left, Public Gardens on the right. You can't miss 'em -- there's a big bank right across the street, next to 'em.

Oh ... (thinking) ... about fifteen minutes.

Man: The Public Garden. Yeah. Come down here with me -- I'm walking that way -- and I'll get you started. Oh. Well, go down to that stoplight (pointing to Cambridge Street). That's Cambridge Street. Go right on Cambridge Street to the elevated station. At the elevated, go left on Charles Street. Follow Charles along the river all the way. The Common will be on the left, the Public Garden on the right. It's about a twenty-minute walk. Don you think you have it now? Right at the stoplight, left at the elevated. Use the tunnel, by the way, to miss that traffic. That's a big traffic circle. Take Charles Street straight to the Public Garden. The Common's on the left, Public Garden's on the right. Lessee ... (Thinks.) Oh yeah -- the first street. You'll cross Beacon Street. Beacon Street is just this side of the Public Garden. On the other side of Beacon is the Public Garden. (Thinks.) That's right -- it'll be on the right hand side of Charles Street, when you cross Beacon.

Oh, it's a big park, with trees. And flowers -- in the summer, there's a lot of tulips and things. It's just a big park.

Let me see. I'm used to walking it all the time. Oh probably fifteen or twenty minutes, depending. Fifteen or twenty minutes.

Mass General Hospital to Public Garden (continued)

Young man: By what means? Oh. Well then, go straight over (pointing to Beacon Hill), constantly bearing in that (pointing south) direction. Go straight up (pointing to Grove Street on Beacon Hill). That street won't go through, but keep working that way. Zig-zag your way over. Know what I mean? The Public Garden is on the other side. You'll see it. It's straight (with emphasis) over. I hate to tell you this way, but it's the way I'd orient myself. I can't tell you any street names.

Oh well. It's a big open green, an open place. That's all. There's no flowers there ... I don't think. You see, there's two contiguous open green places: one is what they call their Public Garden, and the other is the Boston Common. They are separated by a street. You'll cross the Common to get to the Public Garden. Understand? And don't worry about finding anything special. It's just a park.

Fifteen minutes.

Man: Public garden. Yeah. That's a long way from here. Haw ya goin' -- car? Walkin'? Yeah. Gee, it's a long way. You got a thirty-minute walk. Go down here (pointing west down Salem Street) to an overpass. Through the overpass to downtown. (Motions continually with hands, describing words.) You'll see it -- lights, buildings, and things. Downtown is the other side of the overpass. Go through downtown and you can't miss it. The Public Garden is right on the other side of downtown. You can't miss it. Go down through the overpass and up to Scollay Square. Scollay Square. Go left at Scollay Square, and you'll run right into it.

Oh, it's like a big park. It's big -- stretches for miles. Right near town. It's a big green park. There's flowers -- not now though -- and ponds and trees and boats and stuff like that.

Old Italian man with heavy accent: You mean Boston Garden. No, you mean Boston Garden. It's Boston Garden. You mistake'. Go over hill (pointing straight ahead over Hull Street) and keep going left. You understand? Straight over hill, and left.

Oh, it big building. You tell by elevated. Elevated tracks overhead.

Ohh -- ohh. You mean Boston Common. No, you mean Boston Common. Oh, you have a long way. You go straight (pointing west down Salem Street), straight. Down to end, and ask. Boston Common is that way, very far. I cannot tell you how, here. You must go up that way (pointing west down Salem Street) to end and keep going.

Oh, it's a big green place. Big empty place. No buildings (using hands to describe size), no big buildings there.

Maybe fifteen minutes. Yeah.

Two girls:

One: Public Garden. Gee. That's over here (pointing up Hull Street). No. Did you say Boston Garden? No. Well, that's down that way (pointing west), I think. (The other is thinking with chin in hand.) Go down Salem Street and ask.

Other: You want the Public Garden? Listen to me. Go straight down this street (pointing west down Salem Street) until ... No, just go straight down this street. To an overpass. See. Go as far as you can. Just go straight ahead. Don't turn either way. Straight. You'll come to an overpass 'way at the other end. Ask someone there. They'll tell you to keep going straight. Or ... you can go through the overpass, and keep going straight on to the Public Gardens. They are straight ahead from here. Pretend Salem Street kept going straight the other side of the new highway.

Old North Church to Public Garden (continued)

Stay on that line. It would be smarter to ask at the end of this street. Stay right on it, and don't turn.

The first: Wouldn't it be awful if he meant the Boston Garden?

The other: Do you mean the Public Garden or Boston Garden? All right then. 'Cause the Boston Garden is over this hill (pointing north over Hull Street), the other way.

The first: It's lots closer than the Public Garden. You could walk it. Are you walking? I'll bet he means Boston Garden.

The other: Are you sure you want the Public Garden? It's a long way from here (Passing woman overhears, comments:) Does he want Boston Garden or Public Garden?

(At this point, general chaos ensues: three women arguing over what interviewer means, Boston or Public Garden.)

Passing woman: You'll find the Public Garden the other side of Scollay Square. Ask someone at the end of this street (pointing west down Salem Street) to tell you.

(Passing woman moves on.)

The first: He must (with emphasis) mean the Boston Garden.

The other: What do you want to do at the Public Garden, anyway? Yeah. Well, I hope you're not on a wild goose chase. The Gardens seem awful far to be walking.

(More chaos: two girls arguing over what interviewer means, despite his entreaties and attempts at clarification.)

The other: If you're sure it's the Public Garden, go straight down Salem Street. Go under the overpass and straight on. You'll run straight into the Common. That's right, straight ahead. That's what they call it -- the Common.

Ohh -- it's big. You can't miss it: a big green park with a lake in the middle. You can't miss it -- it's the only place open there.

Oh, fifteen minutes, if you don't get lost.

The first: I hope you have the right place.

Old Italian man: Huh? Public Gard'. Isa thataway (pointing west down Salem Street). You ver' far. You must go long way (continuing to wave west down Salem Street). Straight there. You ask him (pointing to passing man).

Passing man: You want the Public Gardens? Umm. Tell you. Go straight down Salem Street to an overpass. You'll see it. You'll have to go right a little. Go through, on up to Scollay Square. Go left, on to Tremont. Go down Tremont, and you can't miss it. It's a big park -- the Common. It's all the Common. You can ask anyone around there where the Common is. But you can't miss it if you stay right on Tremont. You should ask again down there (pointing west down Salem Street) to be sure you won't get lost.

Oh, everyone knows the Common. It's big -- long, real long. Trees everywhere. It looks (with emphasis) like a park. You know, it's a park.

Oh, it might take ... oh, twenty to 25 minutes, depending on whether you go straight there and don't get lost. You've got long legs. Twenty minutes, if you're lucky.

Old Irish lady with heavy brogue: Oh Lord, you're a long way off. Go up ... (pointing north up Summer Street) see Richardson's? See that big red truck? Go straight up there. Just keep goin' straight, and straight on that street and don't turn off. You'll see it. Come right into it. Go straight up there. (Points north up Summer Street.) Straight, and don't turn off either way. You'll cross Washington Street. Keep going straight and you'll see it right there.

Oh, you'll see the greens and trees and things. That'll be the Common. You'll cross the Common to get to the Public Garden.

Oh, about ten minutes. Just go up there where all the lights are (pointing north up Summer Street) and keep going straight. You'll pass Jordan's, and Filene's, and Washington Street. Keep going straight, and you'll see it right there.

Distinguished-looking elderly man: What're ya, walkin'? No matter, it's not far. See up there, Globe Shirt? (Pointing north up Summer Street) Globe Shirt, right there on the corner. See "Pianos?" Take that Summer Street right on up all the way. You'll come to Washington Street -- the big shopping street -- and Jordan's and Filene's -- two big department stores on opposite sides of the street. Cross the street to Winter Street -- a continuation of Summer -- and go right on up to the Public Garden.

Oh, it's a big park. You can't miss it. There's signs everywhere -- "Public Garden," and things.

Oh, no more'n ten minutes.

Sophisticated well-dressed Negro girl with European (probably French) accent: You mean the Common? You must mean the Common. Oh, I think it is that way (pointing northeast, then east), but I am not sure. You must go over there -- cross that ramp. Go across and keep going that way (motioning in northeasterly direction). That way, I think. Walk that way (pointing east) and keep bearing left, I think. Oh, if I only knew where I was! Do you know what that street is (pointing south to Summer Street)? I am all mixed up, but I think it is that way (pointing southeast). Go straight in that direction and you'll come straight into it, I think. An open place. You can't miss it. Keep bearing left, until you come to Washington. That's the main street. Just go along there and you can't miss it. It'll open up right in front of you. Go straight up (pointing northeast) -- I can't tell you exactly -- to Washington. When you've found Washington, go up any side street, I said. Any (with emphasis) street off Washington will take you straight to the Common. Tremont is one block up. It's on Tremont.

Oh, you can't miss it. It's like a big park. Any street that way (pointing northeast) will take you right to it. It's got old men and

South Station to Public Garden (continued)

pigeons all over the place. You can't miss it.

Oh, ten minutes at the most. I hope you find it.

Man: Yeah, the Public Garden. Yeah. The best way is to go around there (pointing to traffic circle) and up there (pointing north up Summer Street). Just keep going straight up there -- Summer Street -- and you come right to it. Just don't get off Summer Street.

Oh, well I mean, it's a big park and all like that. You can't miss it.

Oh, ten or fifteen minutes. It's not far.

Arlington Square to Public Garden

11 a.m. - 12 noon

Woman: (Never stops walking.) Down that way (pointing north down Arlington Street), straight ahead.

Man: Yeah. (Whirls, points north down Arlington Street.) Straight ahead. Can't miss it. See that last building down there? See those fire escapes? Right there. See those trees? That's the Public Garden. Can't miss it.

Little ten-year-old Italian boy: Ah ... oh ... gee. Straight ahead (pointing north down Arlington Street). See down there? See those trees straight ahead? 'Way down there -- 'way, 'way down there? That's where it is. Just go straight ahead. It's a big park, real big. This street will take you right to it. You can't miss it.

Oh, it's a real big park. Come with me. I'll show you. Well, it's like a park -- trees, park benches, things like that. It's real big. You can't miss it -- it's right in town.

Oh, probably no more'n twenty minutes. It's not far.

Man: (Whirls, looks east down Tremont Street.) Tremont Street. Take Tremont Street. Yeah. Straight down to the Common. The Public Gardens are right on the other side of the Common. Do you know what I mean by the Common? Well, you can't miss it. It's right on Tremont. Straight down there. On the left. You'll see the Metropolitan Theater. Right across the street is the Common. The Public Gardens are right across the Common.

Oh, well. It's a big park-like. You know, a big park. It'll be a big park on the left as you go down here (pointing east down Tremont Street). You can't miss it.

Oh, about ten minutes. Straight ahead down there (pointing east down Tremont Street).

Woman with heavy accent: Public Garden. You mean Boston Garden? No, Public Garden. Maybe you mean the Common. There is Boston Common straight ahead (pointing east down Tremont Street).

Oh, it's a big park. Why you want -- you meet someone? Well then, it's the Boston Common all right. You go straight here. You can't miss.

Oh, five minutes. No more.

Man: Public Garden ... (Thinks.) Nope. Where is it supposed to be? ... Nope. I don't have any idea. I've heard of it, but couldn't tell you. Sorry I can't help you.

Man: Can't help you, my friend.

Old white-haired man: You go right down there (indicating east down Columbus Avenue) all the way. The Public Gardens. See that white building (pointing to Esso service station on Columbus Avenue). Yep. Straight down.

They're Gardens. Don't you know what Gardens look like? No flowers, but a big green park. Go to the Statler ... come here. (Moves to better position with full view east down Columbus Avenue.)

No more'n ten minutes. You new in town? Where are you from? (Grabs arm, points east.) See that tallest building down there? A big gray building? That's the Statler Hotel. Lessee ... (thinking) ... Clarendon ... See the Statler? Go left right there. It'll take you direct into the Public Gardens. You can't miss. Just go straight down to the Statler.

Young Negro girl: Public Garden, Public Garden. I don't know where it is. I don't know. (Shakes head.) Would you know what it is? Is it near the Public Library? I think it's in that direction (pointing over shoulder in northwesterly direction). I wouldn't know.

I don't know. (Shakes head.) I've never seen it ... been there (shaking head). (Shakes head.) Uh uh. (Shakes head.)

Old woman: Public Garden. That's down this way (pointing east down Columbus Avenue). Let's see. (Thinks.) What is this street? Warren. (Note: It is Columbus Avenue) Warren ... Go down there (pointing east down Columbus Avenue) to Dartmouth Street. It's about two blocks, I think. Go left at Dartmouth, till you come to Copley Square. Stuart Street ... there take Stuart or Columbus or one of those down to the Public Garden. They'll all get you there. I'd tell you to go straight down here (motion-

Columbus and Warren to Public Garden (continued)

ing east down Columbus Avenue) but I don't think Warren will get you there. You'd get lost down at the end. You'd better go down Columbus or one of those.

Oh. (Laughs.) It's like a big park. The Common. You know. You'll go down Tremont. Tremont'll be here (illustrating with hands: Tremont on right, Public Garden on left), the Public Garden here. The Public Garden and the Common. They're attached, you know. Attached together like one big park. There's a street down the middle -- Charles Street. Just go down here to Dartmouth and over to Copley Square. Ask someone there to tell you further. Are you a stranger in town? Where are you from? Oh. Going to school here? That's nice. Well, go left at Dartmouth (motioning north) to Copley Square. If you can't see the trees and things there, ask someone. But you should get there going down Columbus or Stuart or any of those streets.

Oh, no more'n ten minutes for a big boy like you.

9-10 p.m.

Man: Straight down (pointing east down Columbus Avenue). It's straight down.

Oh, it's a big green park with trees and boats and things. It's ... (pausing) ... pretty far. About a mile down. It's a long way.

'Bout half an hour.

Young Negro man and woman:

Young man: The Public Garden. No, I'm not from around here. The Public Garden ... (thinking) ...

Young woman: What do they do there? At the Public Garden? Oh. He's not thinking of the Boston Garden, is he?

Young man: Are you thinking of the Boston Garden? No. Well, I don't know what you're talking about. I'm just new here myself. New in Boston. Just here for a job. You could go down there (pointing to bar at corner of West Newton Street and Columbus Avenue) to the corner and ask. The boys there will know. They been around here a long time, and sure can tell you.

Young Negro man: Public Garden. Yeah. You lookin' for some fun tonight? Public Gardens are right down there (pointing east down Columbus Avenue). Take a left on Arlington Street, and you're right at the

Columbus and Warren to Public Garden (continued)

Public Garden. But there's nothing doing at the Public Garden. No action there. What do you want to do at the Public Garden? I thought you might be lookin' for a girl.

Oh, it's a great big park-like. You know, a big green place. Can't miss it. I got a couple of girls for ya. It's real good (with emphasis) stuff. If you're really (with emphasis) interested. No? Tch, tch.

Oh, about fifteen minutes.

(Two interviews later, same young Negro man stops interviewer, asks:)

You back from the Public Garden already? Did you find it yet? What'd ya do? change your mind? Do you want that girl now? O.K., then.

(Another interviewer later, same young Negro man stops interviewer again, asks:)

You still lookin' for the Public Garden? Good. Nothin' beats a trial more than a failure.