Witness tied to Boston bombing suspect killed by FBI

Barry Grey, Nick Barrickman
23 May 2013

Twenty-seven-year-old Ibragim Todashev was shot and killed early Wednesday morning while being interrogated by police and intelligence officials in an Orlando, Florida, apartment. Todashev, a friend of Boston Marathon bombing suspect Tamerlan Tsarnaev and, like Tsarnaev, an ethnic Chechen, was reportedly being questioned by a Federal Bureau of Investigation agent from the FBI’s Boston field office, along with Massachusetts state troopers and counterterrorism officials.

The FBI claims that Todashev had implicated both himself and Tsarnaev in the grisly murder of three men in Waltham, Massachusetts, a Boston suburb, on September 11, 2011. They said he then suddenly pulled a knife and tried to attack the FBI agent questioning him. The attack, according to the FBI, prompted the lethal shooting.

Tamerlan Tsarnaev was killed in a shootout with police four days after two bombs detonated near the finish line of the April 15 marathon in downtown Boston killed three people and wounded 264 others. His younger brother, Dzhokhar Tsarnaev, alleged to have participated with Tamerlan in the bombings, is being held in a Massachusetts prison hospital, charged with the capital crime of using a weapon of mass destruction.

One of the three men killed in Waltham in 2011 was a close friend of Tamerlan Tsarnaev, a boxer and martial arts fighter. Brendan Mess, who, like the other two victims of the attack, had his throat slit, was also a boxer and trained at the same gym as Tsarnaev.

Todashev had lived in the Boston area before moving to Florida. A martial arts fighter, like Tamerlan Tsarnaev, he had become friendly with his fellow Chechen. He reportedly last spoke to Tamerlan in April.

There is no reason to accept, as the media has uncritically done, the FBI’s version of Todashev’s death. The elimination of a witness renders even less credible the official line on the Boston bombings and the role of the FBI, the CIA, the Department of Homeland Security and other police and intelligence agencies. It adds to the miasma of cover-up surrounding the Boston attack.

Khusen Taramov, 22, a friend of Todashev who was also questioned by the FBI, told several Orlando television outlets Wednesday morning that Todashev feared for his life. “He felt inside he was going to get shot,” Taramov said of his friend. “I told him, ‘Everything is going to be fine, don’t worry about it.’ He said, ‘I have a really bad feeling.’”

The events in Orlando also undermine the official story that Tamerlan and Dzhokhar Tsarnaev were “lone wolf” and “self-radicalized” individuals, with no connections to other groups. As the Orlando Sentinel reported Wednesday, “FBI sources also told [Orlando television channel] WESH that Todashev has extremist friends overseas.”

From the outset, the government has been eager to portray the Tsarnaevs as lone actors in an apparent effort to limit public information about the multiple contacts between federal police and intelligence agencies and the Tsarnaev family in the months leading up to the bombings, and advance warnings of Tamerlan’s Chechen separatist and Islamic fundamentalist sympathies and connections.

Once again, as in the September 11, 2001 attacks, the alleged perpetrators were well known to US police and intelligence and were being tracked, and the authorities ignored multiple warnings of an impending terror attack. Now, as then, in lieu of any explanation or accountability for, at the very least, a staggering
intelligence failure, and, more plausibly, something
more sinister, the resort is to the threadbare and all-
purpose mantra of a “failure to connect the dots.”

Meanwhile, the Marathon bombings were used as a
pretext to carry out a day-long lockdown of Boston and
its suburbs, in which civil liberties were effectively
suspended and state security forces tested out
techniques for imposing a military dictatorship. The
supposed security “lapses” are being cited as
justification for giving the police and intelligence
agencies even greater powers to spy on and repress
the American people.

It has been acknowledged that in 2011 the FBI and
CIA received multiple alerts from Russian authorities
about Tamerlan Tsarnaev, and that the elder Tsarnaev
brother was placed on a number of terror watch lists.
There are also reports of warnings from Saudi Arabian
officials.

The FBI claims it conducted an investigation into
Tamerlan Tsarnaev in 2011 in which it questioned both
Tamerlan and his parents but found nothing suspicious
and closed the case. The FBI and the Department of
Homeland Security allowed Tamerlan to travel to the
volatile North Caucasus region that includes Chechnya
in January of 2012 and remain for six months, then
return home without being stopped for questioning by
customs or security officials on either leg of the trip.

There are multiple reports that while in Russia,
Tamerlan sought out and made contact with known
Islamist separatists who are waging a terror campaign
against Russian authorities.

And yet, according to both Boston police and FBI
Director Robert Mueller, Boston authorities were never
informed of any of this information regarding the
Tsarnaevs in advance of the Marathon, a mass event
that attracts tens of thousands of people from all over
the world. Instead, the Boston Joint Terrorism Task
Force was reportedly tracking Occupy Wall Street
activists.

The FBI’s current charge that Tamerlan, and possibly
Dzhokhar Tsarnaev, were involved in the triple slaying
in Waltham, Massachusetts, in 2011 underscores the
unbelievable character of its claim that it could find
nothing suspicious about Tamerlan when it carried out
its probe that year, and had no reason to reopen its
investigation thereafter.

The FBI could not have failed to discover the close

connection between Tamerlan and one of the victims of
the triple homicide, making absurd its supposed finding
of “no derogatory” information regarding him.

Far more plausible than the official story is the
likelihood that US intelligence agencies, including the
FBI, were using, or planned to use, Tamerlan Tsarnaev
to further their operations with Islamist separatist forces
in the North Caucasus, with whom they have been
working for many years. These operations include
Washington’s machinations in Russia and the former
Soviet republics, as well as its use of Chechen Islamist
terrorists in its neo-colonial wars in the Middle East,
including the current US proxy war in Syria.

To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact