FBI blocks release of Ibragim Todashev autopsy report

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The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) has blocked Florida officials from releasing the autopsy report on Ibragim Todashev, the 27-year-old Chechen and associate of Tamerlan Tsarnaev who was killed by federal agents during an interrogation on May 22.

The FBI claims that the autopsy report cannot be released because it is conducting an "internal probe" of the incident. As the *Boston Globe* reported on Tuesday, the FBI and the Justice department have enveloped the killing in a "blanket of secrecy."

"Although the autopsy report on Ibragim Todashev was finalized on July 8th, and ready for release, the FBI has informed this office that the case is still under active investigation and thus not to release the document," said Tony Miranda, forensic records coordinator for the medical examiner's office in Orlando.

To say that Todashev's death at the hands of FBI agents was "suspicious" would be a colossal understatement.

On May 29 the *Washington Post* reported that immediately prior to the murder, after hours of interrogation, all of the other interrogators withdrew and left the FBI agent who fired the shots alone with Todashev. The *Post* offered no explanation for the agents withdrawal, and the agent who fired the shots has not been named publicly. None of the agents present at Todashev's home have been detained or questioned in connection with Todashev's death.

Meanwhile, the US government has detained and is preparing to deport Todashe's roommate, Tatiana Gruzdeva.

Asked about Gruzdeva, Hassan Shibly of the Council of American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) Florida office told the *World Socialist Web Site*, "There is a lot of mystery around the detention. There appears to be some sort of cover-up going on."

In the wake of the killing, evidence has surfaced pointing to the fact Todashev's killing was ordered by state officials because the young man possessed sensitive information relating to the Boston bombing.

After the killing, US media issued numerous contradictory reports, with the *New York Times* initially claiming that Todashev went "off the deep end" and pulled a knife on the agents. The official story then mutated to a "samurai sword," and then to a "metal pole" that "might have been a broom stick." Finally, the *Washington Post* reported that Todashev was unarmed.

The FBI report, released on the day of Todashev's death, included no such details, stating simply that "violent confrontation was initiated by the individual."

Within a week of the killing, Todashev's father publicly claimed that autopsy photos proved his son was shot while on the ground, and received a mafia-style, point-blank "control shot" to the head.

Todashev had been interrogated by FBI agents in his Florida home during the hours preceding his death. Before the interrogation began, he told his roommate that he feared for his life.

Todashev had previously cooperated with the FBI investigation on three separate occasions, according to CAIR. The *Boston Globe* reported that Todashev postponed a trip to Chechnya to speak with the agents.

The *New York Times* reported last week that Todashev admitted to the FBI, just prior to his death, that he and Tsarnaev were the perpetrators of an unsolved 2011 triple homicide in Waltham, Massachusetts. (See, "Questions surrounding 2011 triple murder point to government cover-up in Boston Marathon bombing")

As the *Times* article illustrated, Tamerlan Tsarnaev

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was not investigated in connection with the murder despite his close relationship with one of the victims. Brendan Mess, whose throat was cut on September 11, 2011, was reportedly one of Tsarnaev's closest friends. The pair were known to frequent a martial arts gym and a lunch counter together. Neither of these locations were visited by investigators.

Tsarnaev was a frequent visitor to Mess's apartment, where the killing occurred, and investigators determined that the killers must have been trusted by the victims, as they gained entrance without resistance and remained for hours before the murders took place. Multiple associates of Tsarnaev, including his wife, commented to the media that he seemed totally unaffected emotionally by Mess's death, and even joked about it with the owner of the martial arts gym.

In March of 2011, months before the murders occurred, the US government had already received warnings from Russian intelligence that Tsarnaev had connections with radical Islamist militants. Last May, the Russian Federal Security Service claimed that this information could have prevented the bombings in Boston.

After the murders, in January of 2012, Tsarnaev travelled to Dagestan for six months, where he affiliated with Islamist terrorist and separatist groups. Tsarnaev then reentered the United States unhindered, despite his name being on two terrorist watch lists. US authorities have not explained why he was allowed to travel to the volatile region.

Why was Tamerlan Tsarnaev not investigated in connection with the murders? What information about the case did Todashev possess which made his killing necessary?

The most plausible explanation is that Tsarnaev was an intelligence asset, and that Todashev knew about Tsarnaev's intelligence connections and the role they played in covering up the murders.

As such, Todashev could have exposed the fact that both the Boston Marathon bombing and the triple homicide in Waltham, Massachusetts were likely carried out by a man with close connections to US intelligence and the machinations of US imperialism, and that all of this was concealed from the public.

What other details Todashev may have possessed regarding the criminal activities of US intelligence, we may never know. We do know, however, that US intelligence has cultivated ties with extremist militants for decades. Currently, US imperialism is utilizing Islamist militias, including a significant component of Chechen fighters, to advance its hegemonic agenda in Syria. American facilitation of Tsarnaev's activities in the North Caucasus may well have been linked to similar plans for destabilization in that area.

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