

Boston Marathon bombing suspect sustained massive injuries during apprehension

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Dzhokhar Tsarnaev, the 20-year-old suspect in the Boston Marathon bombings, sustained massive injuries while being pursued and eventually apprehended by law enforcement officials, according to medical transcripts released to the press on Monday. His injuries were described at a hearing by Dr. Stephen Jay Odom, the presiding surgeon at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center, only three days after Tsarnaev was captured in Watertown, Massachusetts, a Boston suburb.

Odom explained that Tsarnaev had received “multiple gunshot wounds, the most severe of which appears to have entered through the left side inside of his mouth and exited the left face, lower face.” The trauma surgeon continued: “This was a high-powered injury that has resulted in skull-base fracture, with injuries to the middle ear, the skull base, the lateral portion of his C1 vertebrae, with a significant soft-tissue injury,” as well as “injury to the pharynx, the mouth, and a small vascular injury that’s been treated.”

The report also stated that Tsarnaev had received “multiple gunshot wounds to the extremities,” as well as injuries to his left hand, for which he underwent surgery.

Other documents unsealed Monday include briefs submitted by both prosecution and defense attorneys pertaining to the suspect’s prison records, which Tsarnaev’s lawyers claim they had been barred access to pending a court order while prosecutors had been given free access to the files.

“Defense counsel object to this unrestricted, free access to information regarding their client in this potential capital prosecution,” stated defense attorneys in the brief, asking for the court to stay any future access to Tsarnaev’s records without their prior ability to challenge the move. This latter request was denied

on May 20 by Magistrate Judge Marianne B. Bowler, documents show.

Dzhokhar Tsarnaev is implicated in the April 15 bombings at the Boston Marathon, which killed 3 people and injured 260 others. In the immediate aftermath of the event, federal and local authorities launched a city-wide manhunt for Dzhokhar and his elder brother, Tamerlan, the latter of whom was subsequently killed in a shootout with police. The manhunt in the city of Boston occasioned the suspension of civil liberties and a virtual state of martial law. The city’s population was under a state of siege as authorities searched door-by-door for the younger Tsarnaev, later found hiding in a residential area in nearby Watertown.

Significantly, the medical transcript was taken the day Tsarnaev was read his Miranda rights, which had been denied to him in the 48 hours after he was apprehended, on the grounds of a “public safety exception.” According to Odom’s comments, Tsarnaev, who at the time was heavily medicated, “definitely knows where he is,” although he [the doctor] was “not sure how aware he is of the specifics.”

Early last month, Tsarnaev pleaded not guilty to 45 charges pertaining to the April 15 bombings, as well as the killing of Massachusetts Institute of Technology security guard Sean Collier, who was allegedly shot as the two suspects fled from police. If he is found guilty, Tsarnaev could face the death penalty. (See: “Boston Marathon bombing suspect Dzhokhar Tsarnaev arraigned in federal court”)

The contention of US officials that the two Tsarnaev brothers acted alone and that authorities had no prior knowledge of their activities is false on its face. It is a matter of record that Tamerlan Tsarnaev had been under investigation as early as 2011 by FBI officials

after communiqués had been sent by both Russian and Saudi authorities inquiring about his activities in relation to radical Islam.

The FBI investigated Tsarnaev and claimed to find “nothing derogatory” about his behavior. He was later allowed to travel in 2012 to Dagestan in the Northern Caucasus, where he attempted to establish contact with militant Islamist and separatist groups. Russian officials, who requested that they be alerted should Tsarnaev return to the region, were not notified.

The intimate links between the Tsarnaev family and intelligence agencies in the U.S. have also come to light. Ruslan Tsarni, an uncle of the two suspects, has close business as well as personal ties to the CIA. During the 1990s, Tsarni set up a group called the Congress of Chechen International Organizations, which operated from the suburban Washington, D.C. home of Graham Fuller, a 27-year veteran of the US State Department and CIA and Tsarni’s father-in-law. Among the CCIO’s activities was the running of supplies to Chechen separatist groups active in the Northern Caucasus.

Far from being unknown to U.S. authorities, the Tsarnaevs may well have been abetted or encouraged in their activities by intelligence officials.



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