

FBI agent to be cleared in killing of Ibragim Todashev

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In a brazen whitewash of an execution-style murder, the FBI agent who shot to death Ibragim Todashev during an interrogation will be cleared of all charges, according to media reports.

Press reports late on March 21, based on leaks to the *New York Times* and *Washington Post*, said the Department of Justice will rule that the unnamed FBI agent was justified in using deadly force when he shot and killed Todashev in his Orlando, Florida apartment.

The *Times* also claimed that a Florida prosecutor, state's attorney Jeffrey Ashton, had reached the same conclusion. Ashton's office denied the *Times* report, however, saying that no final decision on charging the FBI agent has yet been made, and that he would release his decision tomorrow.

When he was killed last May, Todashev was being questioned about his relationship with Tamerlan Tsarnaev, the older of two brothers believed responsible for carrying out the bombing of the Boston Marathon last spring. All three men are Chechen immigrants. Only one, the young brother Dzhokhar Tsarnaev, is still alive, facing trial on capital murder charges for his alleged role in the bombing.

Todashev knew Tamerlan Tsarnaev because of their common interest in martial arts. They had been sparring partners and fellow members of the small community of Chechen immigrants in the Boston area.

According to the official story, Todashev had admitted during the interrogation that he and Tsarnaev, among others, took part in a triple-murder in Waltham, Massachusetts on September 11, 2011. Those murders had been classified as drug-related by the local police and never seriously investigated.

After confessing, Todashev then allegedly attacked the agent questioning him, using a metal pole (or some other object, depending on the version of the story), and

the agent shot him in self-defense. Todashev attempted to rise after being shot once, and was then shot several more times (at least one report suggests six times).

According to the *Post* report, "It's not clear what sparked the confrontation. It also remains unclear whether the agent, who worked out of the FBI's Boston office, was alone with Todashev during the shooting."

The FBI cleared the agent after an internal investigation. Of the nearly 150 cases of FBI agents killing or wounding a "suspect" in the past two decades, the agency has never found cause to bring charges, and no agent has ever been prosecuted.

In response to the press reports, both the Council on American-Islamic Relations and the American Civil Liberties Union called on the FBI to provide more details of the circumstances in which Todashev was killed.

Hassan Shibly, executive director of CAIR's Florida chapter, pointed to the arrest and deportation of Todashev's live-in companion, Tatiana Gruzdeva, and his best friend, Khusen Taramov, both of whom contradicted the picture of Todashev painted by the government. The FBI has "done an excellent job ensuring that key friends and witnesses to the events of the night are unable to be in the U.S. before the report is released," Shibly told the press.

A statement from the ACLU of Massachusetts pointed to the shifting explanations given by the FBI of the events of May 22, 2013.

According to the statement by Carol Rose, executive director of the ACLU of Massachusetts, "We still don't know what happened, nor why explanations from those who were present at the shooting death have been inconsistent, suggesting at various times that Mr. Todashev allegedly threatened agents, including with a knife, a pipe, a stick or pole, an agent's gun, the

deceased's martial arts training, or even a samurai sword.”

The conduct of the federal government throughout both the Boston Marathon bombing investigation and the related Todashev killing has been characterized by preposterous official statements and brazen cover-ups.

No explanation has yet been given as to why the FBI and other intelligence agencies ignored reports—including from the Russian government—of Tamerlan Tsarnaev's connections to Islamic fundamentalist guerrilla groups operating in the Caucasus. Nor has the connection between the Tsarnaev family and the intelligence apparatus been properly explored. The Tsarnaev brothers' uncle, Ruslan Tsarni, was closely linked to the CIA and established a CIA-backed Chechen support organization to carry out anti-Russian provocations in that region.

There is every reason to believe that federal agencies either knew of the impending Boston Marathon bombing and allowed it go forward, for their own purposes, or covered up the relationship of the bombers to the US government afterwards.



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