

Boston police, FBI shoot to death alleged terror suspect

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A Boston police officer and an FBI agent shot and killed 26 year-old Usaama Rahim while he waited for a bus to take him to work Tuesday morning. Authorities claim that Rahim was under 24 hour surveillance for an “ISIS-inspired” terrorist threat against police officers, and “lunged” at officers with a knife.

The shooting raises many troubling questions, and inevitably more details will come out. What is certain, however, is that nothing about the official narrative can be taken at face value.

According to the official police story, the two officers approached Rahim as he was about to board a bus to his job at a CVS drug store at around 7 a.m. Tuesday morning for questioning related to the alleged plot. They did not have a warrant for his arrest. Rahim then allegedly pulled out a military knife with an 8-inch blade and “lunged” at the officers, prompting them to draw their weapons and shoot him three times, including twice in the torso, after he refused repeated orders to back down. Police later showed the media the knife that was allegedly brandished by Rahim.

The police narrative was flatly contradicted by Rahim’s brother, Ibrahim Rahim, an imam formerly of Boston who moved to Oakland six months ago to lead the Lighthouse Mosque. “He was confronted by three Boston Police officers and subsequently shot in the back three times,” Ibrahim wrote on Facebook. “He was on his cellphone with my dear father during the confrontation needing a witness. His last words to my father who heard the shots were: I can’t breathe!”

Newly-appointed Attorney General Loretta Lynch defended the incident to the media Wednesday, declaring that “wherever we see evidence of potential terrorist activity, we will take the appropriate law enforcement steps.”

Police also carried out raids throughout the day at

several locations in Massachusetts and Rhode Island, including the apartment building where Rahim lived and a house in Everett, Rhode Island, belonging to one David Wright, who was arrested Tuesday night and arraigned Wednesday night on charges that he conspired with Rahim to destroy evidence of the alleged plot.

Officials who spoke to the media anonymously Wednesday claimed that Wright and Rahim were planning to behead a police officer sometime Tuesday or Wednesday. “We believe the intent was to behead a police officer,” one official told the Boston Globe. “We knew the plot had to be stopped. They were planning to take action Tuesday.” An anonymous law enforcement official claimed to CNN that Rahim had originally planned to behead Pamela Geller, the extreme right-winger who orchestrated an anti-Muslim provocation last month in Texas where two would-be gunmen were killed by police.

Police also searched a home in Warwick, Rhode Island, and asked neighbors about a man in his 20s named Nick, according to a neighbor who spoke with the Globe.

Police had placed Rahim and two associates under 24 hour surveillance because they were “believed to be radicalized by ISIS and other extremist influences,” according to an anonymous police source who spoke with CNN. The Tuesday incident was precipitated, according to police, by a “recent change” in Rahim’s behavior, including threatening social media posts. Police, however, had placed Rahim under surveillance “for at least a couple of years,” CNN’s source said. Police have not yet explained what, if anything, prompted their surveillance of Rahim in the first place.

The entire incident was captured by surveillance footage from a nearby business. Police have declined to

publicly release the video, instead electing to show it to a small number of representatives from civil rights groups and local Muslim organizations. Darnell Williams, a representative of the Urban League, which operates as an adjunct of the Democratic Party, claimed that the video proves the police account and contradicts Ibrahim's claims. Abdullah Faaruuq, a local imam who also saw the video was more circumspect: while he admitted that the video showed that Rahim was not shot in the back, he called the poor-quality footage "inconclusive," and that it was not clear that Rahim was armed with a knife.

Ibrahim Hooper, spokesman for the Council of American-Islamic Relations, expressed skepticism about the official police narrative shortly after the incident. "We have a number of questions: Why exactly was he being followed? What was the probable cause for this particular stop? Were there any video cameras or body cameras of the incident? How do you reconcile the two versions of the story, the family version being that he was on his normal commute to work at a bus stop?"

There is ample reason to doubt the official police version of the shooting. In the first place, there is the fact that the police are going to great lengths to control the media narrative. The police have not yet released anything concrete about the details of the alleged terror plot or the circumstances of Tuesday's shooting. The vast majority of interviews conducted so far with police officials have been on the condition of anonymity, a tactic that is frequently used by the government to disseminate false information without attribution. There is also the extraordinary secrecy surrounding the surveillance video, which has been kept under lock and key away from the eyes of the media despite claims that it completely verifies the police story.

Most significantly, however, are the obvious parallels between this incident and the FBI murder of Ibragim Todashev, an associate of Boston Marathon bomber Tamerlan Tsarnaev, in his Miami home in May 2013. The shooting was justified at the time by the claim that Todashev suddenly brandished a knife and lunged at the officers, who were questioning him in relation to the Boston Marathon bombing. It later emerged, however that Todashev was unarmed, and had been shot execution-style by the officers, who escaped prosecution.

Since 9/11, the high-profile "foiling" of terrorist plots, which later turn out to have been entirely fabricated or even instigated by police provocateurs, have served the function of whipping up a political atmosphere of fear and paranoia, in order to justify ongoing wars abroad under the fraudulent framework of the "war on terror." Nor is this limited to the United States. Last September, unprecedented police raids on Australia involving 800 police officers in response to a similar alleged "ISIS-inspired" beheading plot quickly unraveled when the "terrorist sword" paraded in the media as the weapon to have been used in the attacks turned out to be made of plastic.



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