

INSPIRE, HIJACKING, AND THE SECOND CAR

Just wanted to put up a post addressing several questions on the Boston Marathon attack we've been discussing.

First, NBC reports that Dzhokhar Tsarnaev told authorities they learned how to make a pressure cooker bomb by reading AQAP's Inspire magazine.

The surviving suspect in the Boston Marathon attack has told investigators that he and his brother got instructions on building bombs from an online magazine published by al Qaeda, federal law enforcement officials told NBC News.

Dzhokhar Tsarnaev told investigators that the brothers read the instructions in Inspire, an online, English-language magazine that terror monitoring groups say al Qaeda began publishing in 2010.

The magazine has twice included articles on building bombs with kitchen pressure cookers – the method investigators say Tsarnaev and his brother, Tamerlan, used in the Boston attack.

If true (remember, this revelation presumably took place at a time when Dzhokhar was not 100%), it suggests that killing a bunch of people in Yemen won't keep us safe from terrorism.

No doubt, though, it will be used to distract attention from the other reported fact that the brothers were working alone, and were effectively disgruntled American immigrants reacting to US wars against Muslims rather than members of a foreign terrorist group. Because the punditocracy is trying really hard to avoid considering why guys who had spent so much time in the US would do this, absent external encouragement.

Next, the hijack victim. It had been reported he was not a citizen. The Daily Mail claims the victim was Chinese. This conflicts with an earlier Fox report, which said the victim was white. And in this limited instance, I think Fox may be more accurate than a London rag. But I repeat my earlier questions about whether this victim's identity has been so closely guarded because FBI may need to shore up his visa to ensure he'll be available for testimony (and let me be clear, I say this from close second-hand observation of what happens when a non permanent resident becomes the critical witness in a legal case, which is why I raise it).

Finally, I wanted to draw your attention to this astounding account from a Watertown resident who chronicled the shootout between the brothers and the cops. It appears to be the best account of that fight (and shows that it was not as large scale as we might imagine given the massive manhunt that followed it).

I'm most interested by this description, confirming the brothers did indeed (as earlier reported by the Watertown police chief) have two cars – the stolen Mercedes and a sedan that was reported as a Honda.

The shooters were also driving the green sedan on the left. They had the back passenger door open and were going back into the car where they had additional supplies (assumably, more ammunition and explosives). They also had backpacks at their feet where they also had additional supplies.

The role of the second car is actually something entirely obscured in the complaint, which describes one brother (I suspect, Tamerlan) hijacking the Mercedes, then picking up the other brother, then allowing the victim escape at a snack stop. The complaint then picks up the narrative with the Watertown cops IDing the vehicle.

A short time later, the vehicle was located by law enforcement in Watertown, Massachusetts.

But, given the wonderful time stamps offered in this photo account, the brothers had made their snack stop, gotten the second car, and gotten to Watertown in a matter of 15 minutes.

So where was the car? Had it been stashed somewhere to allow a getaway?