

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday, October 28, 2014

Federal Jury Convicts Friend of Suspected Boston Marathon Bomber

Following an eight-day trial, the jury convicted a college friend of alleged Boston Marathon bomber, Dzhokhar Tsarnaev, for making false statements to investigators assigned to the FBI's Joint Terrorism Task Force.

The jury found Robel Phillipos, 21, of Cambridge, Massachusetts, guilty of making false statements during the terrorism investigation of the Boston Marathon bombings on April 20, 2013, and April 25, 2013. U.S. District Judge Douglas P. Woodlock scheduled sentencing for Jan. 29, 2015.

“In the wake of one of the most significant events in this City’s modern history – an event which left two young women and a child dead, and many more injured – thousands of ordinary citizens assisted law enforcement in identifying and locating the perpetrators,” said U.S. Attorney Carmen Ortiz for the District of Massachusetts. “Today, a federal jury concluded that Robel Phillipos did just the opposite. He lied to agents when he could have helped. He concealed when he could have assisted. It is a crime to lie to law enforcement agents, and that is why Robel Phillipos was charged and why the jury found him guilty today. But this case also reminds us that our public safety network relies on every citizen in the Commonwealth. We look to all of our citizens – our neighbors, our friends, our colleagues, even strangers whom we have never met before – to assist law enforcement in detecting, preventing, and solving crimes. Mr. Phillipos made a choice: a choice to lie instead of tell the truth. With its verdict today, the jury got it exactly right.”

In August 2014, Dias Kadyrbayev pleaded guilty to obstruction of justice charges related to the Boston Marathon bombing investigation. Kadyrbayev admitted to removing evidence from Tsarnaev’s dormitory room at University of Massachusetts Dartmouth and discarding Tsarnaev’s backpack with fireworks, some of which appeared to have been emptied of their explosive powder, in a garbage dumpster. In July 2014, Azamat Tazhayakov was found guilty by a federal jury in Boston of obstruction of justice charges for his role in impeding the Boston Marathon bombing investigation. His conduct was related to the same conduct as charged against Kadyrbayev that occurred in Tsarnaev’s dormitory room on the evening of April 18, 2013.

At the Phillipos trial, the government proved that Phillipos lied about his knowledge and activities on the evening of April 18, 2013. Specifically, Phillipos repeatedly lied to investigators when he denied that, on the evening of April 18, 2013, he entered Tsarnaev’s dormitory room and saw Kadyrbayev remove a backpack containing fireworks.

According to evidence presented at trial, at 7:00 p.m. on April 18, 2013, Phillipos saw the images released by the FBI of the two suspected bombers and immediately recognized one of them as Dzhokhar Tsarnaev. At 10:00 p.m., Phillipos went with Tazhayakov to Tsarnaev’s

dormitory room where he and Tazhayakov watched, as Kadyrbayev searched through Tsarnaev's belongings and found a backpack containing fireworks. When Kadyrbayev, Tazhayakov and Phillipos left Tsarnaev's room at 10:30 p.m., Kadyrbayev removed Tsarnaev's backpack containing fireworks, a jar of Vaseline, and Tsarnaev's laptop computer. Later that night while Tazhayakov and Phillipos were monitoring the manhunt for the Tsarnaevs on television, Kadyrbayev discussed getting rid of the backpack containing the fireworks with them. Tazhayakov agreed with Kadyrbayev that they should get rid of it. After this conversation, Kadyrbayev placed Dzhokhar Tsarnaev's backpack in a garbage bag and placed it in a dumpster outside their New Bedford apartment. The FBI recovered the backpack a week later, after 30 agents spent two days searching a landfill in New Bedford.

Between April 19, 2013 and April 26, 2013, Phillipos was interviewed five times by investigators conducting the Boston Marathon bombing investigation and during each of those interviews Phillipos lied. At the conclusion of the fifth interview, Phillipos finally admitted that he did go into Tsarnaev's dormitory room on the evening of April 18, 2013 and that he saw Kadyrbayev remove evidence from Tsarnaev's room. After he confessed, Phillipos indicated he regretted his decisions. In his signed statement, Phillipos stated: "In retrospect, I should have notified the Police once I knew Jahar was the bomber. Further, I should have turned over the backpack to the authorities."

The charging statute provides a sentence of no greater than eight years in prison for each of the two false statement counts, three years of supervised release, and a fine of \$250,000 for each charge. Actual sentences for federal crimes are typically less than the maximum penalties. Sentences are imposed by a federal district court judge based upon the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and other statutory factors.

The sentencing hearing for Kadyrbayev is scheduled for Nov. 18, 2014, and Tazhayakov's sentencing is scheduled for Nov. 19, 2014.

U.S. Attorney Ortiz and Special Agent in Charge Vincent B. Lisi of the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Boston Field Division made the announcement today. This investigation was conducted by the FBI's Boston Division and member agencies of the Boston Joint Terrorism Task Force (JTTF) which is comprised of more than 30 federal, state and local enforcement agencies. Essex County Sheriff's Office, U.S. Department of Transportation – Office of Inspector General, Massachusetts State Police, University of Massachusetts Dartmouth Department of Public Safety, New Bedford Police Department, Dartmouth Police Department, U.S. Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration (TIGTA), Internal Revenue Service, Criminal Investigations, and Homeland Security Investigations in Boston provided assistance to this investigation.

The case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys B. Stephanie Siegmann and John A. Capin of U.S. Attorney Ortiz's Anti-Terrorism and National Security Unit.

14-1186

[National Security Division \(NSD\)](#)

National Security

