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Boston in shock over Tsarnaev death penalty

By Tara McKelvey
BBC News, Boston

16 May 2015



The end of the trial was shattering, with a sense of shock that liberal Massachusetts had decided to sentence a man to death.

The jurors, seven women and five men, cast their eyes down or kept them closed while the sentence was read out.

None of them glanced in Dzhokhar Tsarnaev's direction. It was as if they could not bear to look at him.

Afterwards one of the jurors, a woman with gold hoop earrings, appeared to weep. Someone touched her lightly.

Turned upside down

A juror in dark-framed glasses held the edge of the jury box. He bit his lips and rubbed his hands. He wiped his face, distraught.

Tsarnaev, 21, stood still.

Outside the courthouse people shook their heads in disbelief.

Mary Duggan, a 28-year-old marketing manager said her reaction was simple: "It's just shock."

The jury's decision has turned liberal Massachusetts upside down.

Most people here oppose the death penalty. **A recent poll done by WBUR**, for example, shows 60% of voters living in Boston think Tsarnaev should be sentenced to life in prison.

The jurors were chosen, however, because they said they would be willing to consider the death penalty.

In this way they are different from the majority of the people who live in the state.

However, watching the jurors for hours in the courtroom, it is hard to see them as all that different. One of the jurors was a student. The others were professionals, including a legal executive and a former nurse.

While they may not have reflected the majority opinion of those living in Massachusetts, they captured a mood as well as a widely shared and until now pent-up desire to punish Tsarnaev.

'Lucked out'

When I spoke to people in Boston during an earlier phase of the trial, some hinted they might support a death penalty. But they did not come out and say it - at least, not to me, and not back then.

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Now that the sentence has been imposed, the people of Massachusetts do not look so liberal. Some even say that the jurors went easy on him.

Michael Campagnone, a 36-year-old sommelier at Strega's restaurant, says Tsarnaev "lucked out".

"At the end of the day, it should be more than death," said Mr Campagnone. "He should face the families to explain himself and say why he did it."

One woman who works in a nearby hotel had another idea: "Put him in a cage and let wild animals tear him apart."

Tsarnaev remained stone-faced in court. He acted this way, too, when victims of the bombings talked about what happened to them on the day of the Boston Marathon.

REUTERS

Only two of the jurors believed Tsarnaev has felt remorse. The other 10, like many in Massachusetts, think he has no regrets.

Even those who oppose the death penalty get tripped up when they talk about it. Beth Pardo, a special-education teacher who lives in East Longmeadow, says she is against the death penalty but wonders whether he showed any remorse.

"You were there," she says, looking at the courthouse down the street. "Did he?"

I shake my head.

She says: "If he had no remorse..." Her voice trails off. She says she can see why the jurors made their decision and then heads off.

The victims

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- Restaurant manager Krystle Campbell, 29, had gone to watch a friend complete the race
- Chinese graduate student Lu Lingzi was studying statistics at Boston University
- Eight-year-old Martin Richard was standing with his family, cheering the runners
- Police officer Sean Collier was shot by the Tsarnaev brothers as they tried to evade arrest

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Pan Tiku, 75, an investment adviser who is wearing ear buds in Starbucks and listening to a sermon in Urdu, says that he hopes Tsarnaev will be spared.

"I'm not a believer in eye-for-eye," he says, while acknowledging that the jurors examined the evidence "methodically".

"They came to the right conclusion based on the law," he says. "They would be negligent if they did not do what the law states."

Daniel Medwed, a professor at Northeastern University School of Law in Boston, says the jurors made a calculus: "At the end of the day they probably just conducted a balance - that the horror of the crime outweighed any argument that he should be spared."

After the sentencing was delivered, the jurors left the room in single file. A moment later, guards led Tsarnaev through a side doorway.

He walked out of the room in the same way he had done before - with a slight swagger and in high spirits, as if he were going to a place that is fun and exciting and full of marvel.

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