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MIT's chief calls for death penalty in Boston bombing case



A supporter of Boston Marathon bombing suspect Dzhokhar Tsarnaev runs away from television cameras after his arraignment in federal court on Wednesday, July 10, 2013. The 19-year-old has been charged with using a weapon of mass destruction, and could face the death penalty.

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MIT's grief-stricken police chief vented his anger at accused teen terrorist Dzhokhar Tsarnaev yesterday, calling the ethnic Chechen a "punk" who deserves the death penalty if convicted of carrying out the horrific Boston Marathon twin bombings and the murder of campus cop Sean Collier.

"The man deserves to die if he's found guilty," MIT chief John DiFava said outside federal court after Tsarnaev pleaded not guilty to 30 charges related to the marathon attack. "He's guilty of killing other people. He's guilty of inflicting hurt on other people. Where does it stop? We let him live at our expense, for the rest of his life? I'm sorry. He deserves the death penalty.

"He's a punk," DiFava added. "He's a typical bad guy. Now he's in handcuffs. But in the meantime, getting here, he caused an awful lot of hurt and pain."

DiFava was joined outside court by a long blue line of MIT officers who stood in tribute to Collier.

Seventeen of the charges against Tsarnaev, 19, carry the death penalty. Carmen M. Ortiz, the top federal prosecutor in Massachusetts, has not yet made her death-penalty recommendation to U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder, who will decide whether to seek Tsarnaev's execution.

Ortiz, who previously prosecuted state crimes in Middlesex County and economic cases for the U.S. Department of Justice, has little track record on the death penalty.

But a member of the team that recommended her for the job said he'd be shocked if she didn't push for capital punishment.

"There's little doubt in me she would pursue it in this case," said Harvard law professor Charles Ogletree. "Given the nature of the crime, the flight that followed and the permanent and deadly injuries to some of the victims, it's something I think she would consider as an adequate justification."

Judge Marianne B. Bowler's 110-seat courtroom was packed to capacity yesterday, with 30 victims and their families, along with 25 other spectators and a gaggle of international media sitting in rapt silence, with eyes fixed on the suspect. Tsarnaev repeatedly said "not guilty" — at least once in an accent — but said nothing else. He blew a kiss to two women in the courtroom, one of whom was holding a baby. They refused to identify themselves to a Herald reporter afterward, but multiple observers said they are Tsarnaev's sisters.

Seeing him in the flesh was "eerie" and "upsetting," said Mildred Valverde, 44, of Somerville, who was at the finish line of the marathon April 15 when a bomb blast tossed her into a barrier and caused a concussion.

Liz Norden, whose sons J.P. and Paul each lost a right leg in the Boylston Street blasts, said the sight of Tsarnaev disgusted her.

"I actually felt sick to my stomach," she said. "It was very emotional for me."

Authorities say Tsarnaev and his slain brother Tamerlan set a pair of pressure-cooker bombs at the Boston Marathon finish line, killing Martin Richard, 8; Krystle Marie Campbell, 29, and Lingzi Lu, 23. Approximately 280 others were injured. The Tsarnaev brothers are also accused of ambushing and fatally shooting Collier, 27, in a desperate attempt to escape after the FBI publicly identified them as suspects three days later.

DiFava said he understands why Collier's family did not attend yesterday's hearing.

"How much can they take? How can a parent look at the murderer of their child? I don't think I'd be here. It's hard enough for me as the chief, let alone to be a parent and look at the murderer of my child. I think that's asking a lot."

Tags: [Dzhokhar Tsarnaev](#), [MIT](#), [Sean Collier](#)



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