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By Maria Cramer and Peter Schworm

GLOBE STAFF MAY 16, 2013

Just before his capture last month, Boston Marathon bombing suspect Dzhokhar Tsarnaev scrawled a note inside the boat where he was hiding that seemed to take responsibility for his role in the attack, according

to two law enforcement officials with knowledge of the message.

After police forced Tsarnaev out of the boat, trailered at a Watertown residence, they found the handwritten message in which he praised Allah and said he would soon be joining his dead brother, Tamerlan, according to one of the officials.

“They found a note that took responsibility,” said the official, who did not provide additional details.

The message in the boat appears to match statements Tsarnaev made to authorities after his capture, but seems to provide a clearer picture of his motives.

The note could bolster prosecutors’ case against Tsarnaev, the official said.



Brewing company to honor slain MIT officer

Cambridge Brewing Company is creating “Collier Stout” in honor of Sean Collier, the police officer allegedly killed by the bombing suspects.

More bombing coverage

Both officials asked for anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss the case publicly.

CBS News first reported the note, citing unnamed sources who said Tsarnaev referred to the Marathon victims as “collateral damage” and likened them to Muslims who were killed in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

“When you attack one Muslim, you attack all Muslims,” Tsarnaev wrote, the network reported.

The piece of the boat’s interior Dzhokhar Tsarnaev wrote on probably will be removed from the hull and presented as evidence if he goes to trial, The New York Times reported Thursday. The message was scrawled with a pen, the newspaper reported.

The Tsarnaev brothers allegedly planted the bombs that killed three people and injured more than 260 others at the Boston Marathon finish line on the afternoon of April 15. The brothers also are accused of killing MIT Police Officer Sean Collier.

Tsarnaev, 19, faces federal charges that could bring the death penalty. He is being held at Federal Medical Center Devens, a detention facility for male prisoners about 40 miles west of Boston.

Tamerlan Tsarnaev, 26, was killed after a shootout with police in Watertown several days after the bombings. Authorities say he was also run over by his younger brother, who was making a desperate bid to escape police.

Dzhokhar Tsarnaev was captured later that day near the shootout scene in a boat parked in the backyard of a home. The target of a massive dragnet, he was taken into custody after a tense standoff. Three other men, former classmates of Dzhokhar Tsarnaev at UMass-Dartmouth, have been charged with either trying to cover up his role in the bombing or lying to federal investigators.

The bombings shook the nation and raised questions about why the brothers turned to terrorism, whether they had help, and whether law enforcement and security officials could have prevented the attacks.

Under questioning from FBI agents, Dzhokhar Tsarnaev allegedly admitted that he and his brother were behind the bombings. He claimed that he and his brother acted alone and that his brother had become a follower of radical Islam in part because of his opposition to US wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the Globe has reported.

Those statements came before investigators informed Tsarnaev of his rights to counsel and to remain silent, which could make them inadmissible in a trial.

A man who was allegedly carjacked by the brothers also told authorities that Tamerlan Tsarnaev admitted to

the bombings and to killing Collier.

Federal investigators have now learned that Tamerlan Tsarnaev had met with a former Chechen resistance figure, Musa Khadjimuradov, in Manchester, N.H., less than a month before the attacks, Voice of America reported.

FBI agents have searched his home and have been in frequent contact since first interviewing him April 29, the news agency reported.

Khadjimuradov said agents questioned him about Tamerlan Tsarnaev practicing at a Manchester shooting range and buying fireworks in Seabrook, N.H., Voice of America reported.

The new details of the investigation and the note — especially the reported reference to the bombing victims as “collateral damage”— prompted strong reactions Thursday. Liz Norden, the mother of one of the bombing victims, said she was upset by the note, calling the reference “disturbing.”

Paul Norden, who lost his right leg in the attack, was discharged Thursday from Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital in Charlestown.

“Paul’s done remarkably well,” Alexis Iaccarino, a resident psychiatrist, said at a brief news conference. “He’s shown great resilience,” she said.

Liz Norden said it was a great day “because we get Paul home.”

She has been concentrating on her son’s recovery, she added, and had not given the bombing suspects much thought. She said she was a “little nervous” about her son leaving the hospital, but she thought he would be fine.

Her other son, J.P. Norden, also lost a leg in the bombing and is being treated at Spaulding. He is expected to be discharged May 24.

In the city where Tsarnaev was captured, meanwhile, residents were angered by the message.

“I kind of figured that was how they were feeling, but . . . the people are collateral damage?” said Marlene Mangabat, 31. “I knew it was some type of hate.”

Mangabat said her home was hit by bullets as some officers opened fire at the boat. She recalled huddling with her family, including her niece and infant nephew, on the kitchen floor and then in the basement, before being evacuated.

The idea that as she took cover Tsarnaev was claiming responsibility for the bombing was unsettling, she said.

“While I’m looking out there, he was in there, writing this message,” she said.

Kay Lazar and Evan Allen of the Globe staff contributed to this report.



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