

The Real Face of Terror: Behind the Scenes Photos of the Dzhokhar Tsarnaev Manhunt

(In response to the controversial *Rolling Stone* cover, new photos of Tsarnaev's capture emerge.)

by John Wolfson (*Boston Daily*)

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- A sniper trains his bead on Tsarnaev.

(All photos by Sean Murphy)

- ¹ The *Rolling Stone* cover featuring the suspected Boston Marathon bomber, Dzhokhar Tsarnaev has, of course, set off a firestorm of controversy across the country. Critics believe that the cover glamorizes Tsarnaev, depicting him as a kind of rock 'n roll outlaw rather than a terrorist who has been charged with killing four people and seriously wounding hundreds of others.
- ² Sgt. Sean Murphy, a tactical photographer with the Massachusetts State Police who has photographed the funerals of many officers killed in the line of duty, is furious with the magazine. Murphy, who also acts a liaison to the families of fallen officers, is so angered by the cover—which he says is both dangerous and insulting to the victims of the bombings—that he feels the need to counter the message that it conveys.
- ³ We all remember the day of the manhunt, when Governor Patrick and law enforcement officials decided, in essence, to shut Boston down. Throughout it all, Murphy, alone in his assignment behind police lines, was capturing images of the day's events—the high-level conferences, the mobilization of law enforcement, and the dramatic capture. Because the whole thing was televised live, everyone knows that the day ended with a wounded Tsarnaev being taken into custody. What few people have seen, because Murphy's photos from that day have never been made public before, is the condition Tsarnaev was in at the time of his capture—and, indeed, exactly how he was captured. Murphy wants the world to know that the Tsarnaev in the photos he took that night—defeated and barely alive, with the red dots of sniper rifles lighting up his forehead—is the real face of terrorism, not the handsome, confident young man shown on the magazine cover. Following are a number of his photos from that day. A more complete collection will appear in our September issue.
- ⁴ Here, in his own words, Murphy shares his thoughts on the *Rolling Stone* cover. He stresses that he is speaking strictly for himself and not as a representative of the Massachusetts State Police:

“As a professional law-enforcement officer of 25 years, I believe that the image that was portrayed by Rolling Stone magazine was an insult to any person who has ever worn a uniform of any color or any police organization or military branch, and the family members who have ever lost a loved one serving in the line of duty. The truth is that glamorizing the face of terror is not just insulting to the family members of those killed in the line of duty, it also could be an incentive to those who may be unstable to do something to get their face on the cover of Rolling Stone magazine.

“I hope that the people who see these images will know that this was real. It was as real as it gets. This may have played out as a television show, but this was not a television show. Officer Dick Donohue almost gave his life. Officer Sean Collier did give his life. These were real people, with real lives, with real families. And to have this cover dropped into Boston was hurtful to their memories and their families. I know from first-hand conversations that this Rolling Stone cover has kept many of them up—again. It’s irritated the wounds that will never heal—again. There is nothing glamorous in bringing more pain to a grieving family.

“Photography is very simple, it’s very basic. It brings us back to the cave. An image like this on the cover of *Rolling Stone*, we see it instantly as being wrong. What *Rolling Stone* did was wrong. This guy is evil. This is the real Boston bomber. Not someone fluffed and buffed for the cover of *Rolling Stone* magazine.”



- Tsarnaev’s image distributed to troopers at roll call.



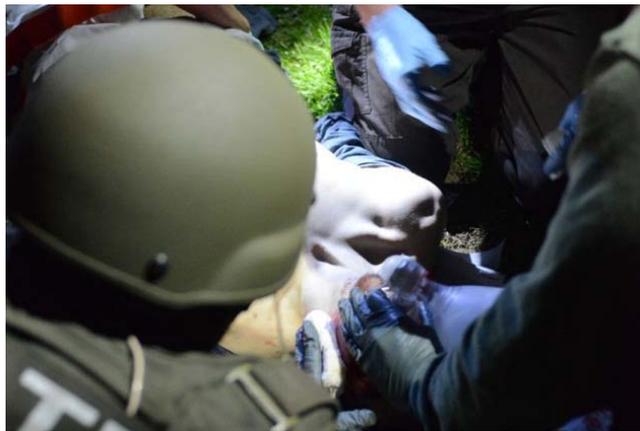
- Law enforcement officials converge on the boat where Tsarnaev is hiding.



- Tsarnaev emerges from the boat.



- Tsarnaev on the boat.



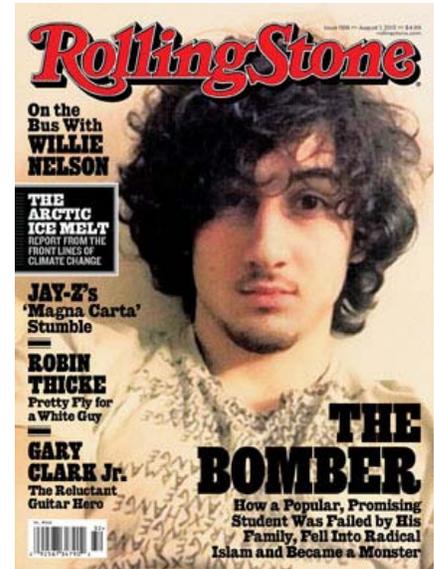
- Tactical EMTs attend to Tsarnaev

The Inconvenient Image of Dzhokhar Tsarnaev

by Ian Crouch (*The New Yorker.com*)

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- The magazine cover retains its unique cultural power—to amuse, to inform, to agitate, or, as is the case with the forthcoming August 1st issue of *Rolling Stone*, to enrage. That cover, unveiled on Tuesday night, features a photographic self-portrait of the Boston Marathon bombing suspect Dzhokhar Tsarnaev, who last week pleaded not guilty to thirty charges, including using a weapon of mass destruction to kill, and could face the death penalty for his alleged role in the April attack. The image accompanies a reported piece by Janet Reitman, which, according to a blog post published by the magazine, includes dozens of interviews with people who knew Tsarnaev and is “a riveting and heartbreaking account of how a charming kid with a bright future became a monster.” The full article was posted on Wednesday afternoon, two days earlier than originally planned, but public opinion regarding it, and the issue in which it appears, was already fixed earlier in the day. On the magazine’s Facebook page, thousands of comments express some version of what appears to be a popular refrain: “Rolling Stone, fuck you!” The cover has been called “shameful,” “disgusting,” “tasteless,” and a “slap in the face to America.” Boston public officials have issued similar appraisals: Mayor Thomas Menino called it “a total disgrace.” CVS, Walgreens, and other local retailers have promised not to sell the issue.
- But just because something sparks outrage doesn’t mean that it is outrageous. Menino, on Wednesday, added that the cover, or perhaps the story itself, “should have been about survivors or first responders.” There have been many moving and illuminating stories about the victims of the marathon attack, and the people who selflessly came to their aid, but this is not one of them. Instead, the *Rolling Stone* article is about the still largely mysterious backstory of a young man who transformed, in what appears to be a short amount of time, from a seemingly normal college student into an alleged terrorist. The facts of his life are important, the larger social implications of his biography are important—and so this story has the potential to be a valuable contribution to the public record and to the general understanding of one of the most serious incidents of domestic terrorism in American history. And so, in the plainest terms, *Rolling Stone* chose to promote an article about Dzhokhar Tsarnaev with a photo of Dzhokhar Tsarnaev—one that other news outlets, including the *New York Times* and *Washington Post*, had previously published. It does not appear that the magazine altered the image in any meaningful way. Nor does the photograph convey an editorial opinion about the subject; the accompanying cover text, meanwhile, identifies Tsarnaev as a “monster.” It shows him as he looked when he allegedly killed four people and injured hundreds more.
- Many commenters on Facebook have complained that the image gives Tsarnaev the “rock star” treatment—that his scruffy facial hair; long, curly hair; T-shirt; and soft-eyed glance straight at the camera all make him look like just another *Rolling Stone* cover boy, whether Jim Morrison or any of the many longhairs who appeared in the magazine’s nineteen-seventies heyday. But these elements are not engineered. What is so troubling about this image, and many of the others that have become available since April, is that Tsarnaev



really does look like a rock star. In this way, the photograph on *Rolling Stone* is of a part with the often unexpected, and unsettling, portrait of Tsarnaev that has emerged over the past few months.

- 4 The earliest image, made available by the F.B.I. while Tsarnaev was still the target of a massive manhunt, showed him near the bomb site in a backward white baseball cap. He looked young, and chillingly anonymous, just another dude in a hat, a kind of bro-bomber. Then others surfaced: of him as a baby-faced young man; a shot of him at his high-school graduation, in a black robe with a red carnation pinned near his left shoulder; others of him smirking, smiling; one in which he wears aviator shades—the kinds of digital snapshots that every young American projects into the world. What we didn't see, and what perhaps we longed to see in our grief, or anger, or confusion, were any familiar images of the Islamic terrorist. The stories didn't match the crime, either: the pot-smoking kid, the skateboarder, the student at the diverse Cambridge high school, the anonymous undergrad at the state college. Dzhokhar Tsarnaev's older brother, Tamerlan, fit our expectations much better. He looked older and angrier, and the accompanying biographical information was consistent with the appearance: he was alienated, radicalized, adrift, and dangerous. But the police killed Tamerlan during that frightening night in Watertown. He is dead, and Dzhokhar is alive.
- 5 This may be the most inconvenient fact about Dzhokhar Tsarnaev: that he has survived to face trial, and so to keep facing the rest of us who live in Boston, and in the rest of the country. On Wednesday, defenders of *Rolling Stone* pointed out that the magazine doesn't only put musicians and celebrities on its cover: in 1970, it ran a cover piece about Charles Manson. Looking at that image now, Manson himself resembles something of a rock star of his time. And it was true then, too: much of what made him so terrifying had to do with the ways in which he was inseparable from his greater zeitgeist. Manson was a murderer and a kind of twisted celebrity, and in that way a forerunner to the modern terrorist. The angry commenters on Facebook today can be forgiven for not wanting to look at Tsarnaev, or preferring instead to think of the victims and the heroes, and for worrying about the ways in which some have elevated Tsarnaev as a martyr and an object of obsession. The photo on the cover of *Rolling Stone* is the same one that "Dzhokhar Is Innocent" advocacy groups and #FreeDzhokhar Web groupies, mostly young women, use to honor their cause and crush. Everyone, in this age, understands the power of images, and the ways in which that power can lead to troubling ends—including, as Paul Bloom wrote in a recent post, misdirected empathy for an alleged mass killer.
- 6 Yet the vitriol and closed-mindedness of the Web response to the *Rolling Stone* cover, before anyone had the chance to read the article itself, is an example of two of the ugly public outcomes of terrorism: hostility toward free expression, and to the collection and examination of factual evidence; and a kind of culture-wide self-censorship encouraged by tragedy, in which certain responses are deemed correct and anything else is dismissed as tasteless or out of bounds. The victims of the Boston Marathon bombing deserve our attention, and will continue to teach us about perseverance and the best parts of our common nature. But the dark stories of the bombing need to be told, too. And we need to hear them.