

Mumia Abu Jamal Newspaper Admonishes DA to Stop Defending the Indefensible

Featuring “Pam Africa’s Message to the Movement,” published in the Jamal Journal newspaper and at BlackAgendaReport.com. *“DA Krasner can no longer ignore what we are saying, and he can no longer claim that he has not been presented with our evidence of police, prosecutorial, and judicial misconduct.”*

(Sign the Color of Change Petition to Philadelphia District Attorney Larry Krasner: Stop Defending Mumia Abu-Jamal’s Unjust Conviction! Sign: www.JamalJournal.com)

Welcome to our first issue of the newly restarted Jamal Journal. We last published the Jamal Journal in the mid-1990s, and today we are excited to launch our newspaper and website (www.JamalJournal.com) at this absolutely critical time.

Mumia’s health has improved somewhat since he nearly died from a diabetic coma that was induced by untreated Hepatitis-C. After we won a lawsuit against the prison authorities, Mumia finally received treatment and fully recovered from Hepatitis C.

Unfortunately, the Hepatitis C also gave Mumia cirrhosis of the liver, and this is a very serious health problem that is made even worse by the conditions of his imprisonment. Just this month, Mumia reports that the severe itching, a symptom experienced previously, is returning and he does not know why. Mumia is 66 and it has now been 39 years since his arrest on December 9, 1981. This is an urgent situation, folks, and we need your help.

The Petition to DA Krasner

The Jamal Journal’s lead story is our petition to Philadelphia District Attorney Larry Krasner, demanding that he stop defending Mumia’s conviction and that he secure Mumia’s release as quickly as he possibly can.

Before he became District Attorney, he was known for defending protesters that had been arrested by police, and he now describes himself as a “progressive” prosecutor that is bringing principles of social justice into the District Attorney’s office. He has implemented some positive reforms confronting police corruption, and he has helped to exonerate over a dozen people. We support that.

Furthermore, we are glad that DA Krasner gave the six previously undisclosed file boxes to Mumia’s defense team. This is important evidence that should have been dis-

closed by previous DAs.

However, it is completely unacceptable that he continues to defend Mumia’s 1982 conviction. If DA Krasner wants to embrace anti-racist principles, if he sincerely believes in confronting the ugly legacy of institutionalized white supremacy that continues to infest Philadelphia’s ‘criminal justice system,’ then he needs to take an honest look at the facts of Mumia’s case. With our petition, we are presenting DA Krasner with an opportunity to do the right thing.

With our petition and newspaper, we are presenting the facts of the case to DA Krasner in a clear and accessible way. The petition presents a short summary, while our 40-page newspaper provides even more documentation of the injustice in Mumia’s case. Therefore, DA Krasner can no longer ignore what we are saying, and he can no longer claim that he has not been presented with our evidence of police, prosecutorial, and judicial misconduct.

The Evidence in the Petition

The well-documented misconduct in Mumia’s case is so bad and so extensive that it has forever destroyed the prosecutor’s case. The facts speak for themselves, and we are confident that an honest investigation of Mumia’s case will show this to be true.

Our petition summarizes key facts in regards to the Batson issue, about the use of peremptory strikes to remove otherwise qualified black potential jurors. Judge Albert Sabo’s despicable behavior at the 1982 trial and later at the 1995-97 PCRA Hearings is another focus of the petition. There is also the fact that the DA suppressed Pedro Polakoff’s crime scene photos.

The conclusion of our petition cites the results of a test performed in 2010 by Philadelphia journalists Linn Washington and Dave Lindorff. They sent a crime scene photo by Pedro Polakoff to NASA photo analyst Robert Nelson, asking him to look for any markings from the bullets that Mumia was accused of shooting downwards at Officer Faulkner.

Washington and Lindorff also sent Robert Nelson a photo of a concrete slab that they shot a .38 revolver into, which displayed clear markings where the bullets made contact. After applying the same technology used to analyze photographs taken in outer space, the NASA analyst couldn’t find anything in the crime scene photo that resembled the bullet marks visible on the concrete slab.

Washington and Lindorff concluded that “the whole prosecution story of an execution-style slaying of the officer by Abu-Jamal would appear to be a prosecution fabrication, complete with coached, perjured witnesses, undermining the integrity and fairness of the entire trial.”

Let me repeat that: Here is physical evidence that completely disproves the prosecution theory used to convict Mumia. This also proves that prosecution eyewitnesses Robert Chobert and Cynthia White’s testimony was a lie. We concluded our petition by citing Washington and Lindorff’s test because this is such powerful evidence for exposing the frameup. DA Krasner must not ignore this!

Our Demands

ICFFMAJ has always called for Mumia’s immediate release because we believe he is innocent and that he should never have been imprisoned in the first place. At the same time, ICFFMAJ has always worked alongside anyone supporting a new trial, and we will continue to do this.

But after 39 years in prison, Mumia is now an elder in poor health, and every day counts. Therefore, if Mumia’s conviction is overturned because of the well-documented police, prosecutorial, and judicial misconduct, Krasner should accept the overturned conviction and not retry him.

Maureen Faulkner and the FOP have seen the writing on the walls and they know that Mumia will eventually be released. In fact, Maureen Faulkner recently told journalist Noelle Hanrahan that she believes Mumia will be released if he can get a new trial. Of course, that is why they have been trying to drag out Mumia’s appeal process however

they can, with the King's Bench Appeal being the most recent example. Like all of the frivolous lawsuits Donald Trump filed during his last months as President, the Kings Bench Appeal was meant to delay Mumia's inevitable release.

Like Mayor Frank Rizzo before him, Donald Trump's outrageous public advocacy of police violence has fueled grassroots movements like Black Lives Matter, creating a new generation of activists. This new generation will no longer accept overt displays of white supremacist values, like those represented by the Rizzo statue across from City Hall and the Rizzo mural in South Philadelphia's Italian Market. Thankfully, these have both been removed from the City.

Confronting Frank Rizzo's horrifying legacy is a good first step. Now the City of Philadelphia needs to deal with the legacy of Judge Albert Sabo, known as a "prosecutor in robes," a hardcore racist who was also notorious for his extreme judicial bias in cases other than Mumia's. We do not want the appeals process to continue dragging on when there is already so much public information about the injustice in Mumia's case. Delaying Mumia's release will only make the injustice worse.

DA Krasner now must decide which side of history he wants to be on. He has a choice.

The New Krasner Brief

As you can see from our petition, we have been seeking to approach Larry Krasner diplomatically. In our effort to attract the widest possible range of supporters, we have written the petition with polite language. We are trying to give DA Krasner the benefit of the doubt, by considering the possibility that he is sincere in his stated desire to confront Philadelphia's ugly history of racial injustice.

For Mumia's sake, we truly hope that DA Krasner's defense of Mumia's conviction is because he has not actually researched the case himself, that his position on Mumia's case is simply a product of the Philadelphia corporate media's well-documented bias against Mumia. We are sincerely presenting him with an opportunity to rethink his position and to do the right thing. We hope that he listens.

Despite our optimism, on Feb. 3, Philadel-

phia District Attorney Larry Krasner filed a new brief in Mumia's case, where he continued to defend the legitimacy of Mumia's 1982 conviction. DA Krasner's several years of opposing Mumia's appeals has already been vile and disgusting. However, with this new brief, he somehow manages to stoop even lower.

There is much to criticize about DA Krasner's Feb. 3 brief, but one particular aspect really stood out for me. On page five, in the section titled "Statement of Facts," the brief states:

"Officer Faulkner was put in a police van and rushed to Jefferson University Hospital. When the police attempted to handcuff defendant and place him in a police wagon to transport him to the hospital, he violently resisted. He continued to struggle against the officers when they subsequently brought him inside the hospital, the same one in which doctors were attempting to save Officer Faulkner's life. The officers carrying defendant—he refused to walk—temporarily placed him on the floor of the lobby next to the entrance to the emergency room."

Does DA Krasner Oppose Lynchings?

Has DA Krasner actually read the trial transcripts? If so, does he realize the implications of him describing Mumia's arrest in such a despicable way?

What actually happened that morning when police arrived on the scene was an attempted lynching of Mumia, with the police acting as the white supremacist lynch mob.

Before even speaking with a single eyewitness, the mob of cops brutalized Mumia so viciously that when his sister Lydia arrived at the hospital she could not even recognize him. Make no mistake, the cops wanted him to die from the gunshot wound before receiving medical treatment, ultimately taking over 30 minutes to begin treatment at the hospital. This was an obvious attempt to execute him before even conducting an investigation, let alone a fair trial.

Has DA Krasner read the trial testimony of defense witness Dessie Hightower who reported seeing someone flee the crime scene immediately after the shooting? At trial, Hightower described Mumia's arrest as being "an attack" by the police. In his book "The Framing of Mumia Abu-Jamal," author

J. Patrick O'Connor summarizes Hightower's trial testimony:

"He said that shortly after the first police officer showed up, about eight or nine other officers arrived. He then observed three or four of them striking Abu-Jamal with nightsticks while one or two others were kicking him and pulling him by his dreadlocks. He also saw the police, in carrying Abu-Jamal to the police van, ram his head into a no-parking pole and drop him to the ground."

Has DA Krasner read the trial testimony of Dr. Regina Cudemo, who was working at the hospital when Mumia arrived? If not, author J. Patrick O'Connor has also summarized her account:

"She testified that she saw Abu-Jamal at about 4:20 AM on the floor, 'on what I call the treadles of the emergency room'—the mats outside the emergency room doors. She said four to six police were around Abu-Jamal...she saw one of the police officers around Abu-Jamal raise his leg and then heard Abu-Jamal 'moan.' After observing this incident, she said she was directed by another police officer to leave the area."

O'Connor also writes that after Mumia was dropped on the floor of the entryway to the emergency room, "instead of taking Abu-Jamal to an operating room, hospital security guard Priscilla Durham had the police drag him to the family room." Only after this, "Abu-Jamal was brought handcuffed to the emergency room for surgery."

Does DA Krasner think that an attempted police lynching of a prominent Black journalist, loving father, and respected community activist is some kind of joke?

If he has read the trial testimony of Dessie Hightower and Dr. Regina Cudemo, why is he not concerned about Mumia's treatment by police that morning?

Lastly, how could he possibly write such an offensive description of Mumia's treatment by police, like claiming that Mumia "refused to walk" into the hospital after he had been shot in the chest and nearly beaten to death?

We need answers from DA Krasner.

Please sign our petition!