

# The Jamal Journal

**Published by the uncompromising International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal**

UN Condemns Hospital Shackling of Mumia II April 24 2021 Birthday Celebrations  
Victoria Law: Anti-Asian Violence II Russell "Maroon" Shoatz II The Angola 3  
Tayo Aluko II Todd Steven Burroughs II Julia Wright II Janine Jackson

## **We Challenge DA Larry Krasner and CNN's Michael Smerconish!**

Written by Pam Africa, coordinator of the uncompromising International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal

Ona Move! Long Live John Africa!

Thank you for reading the second issue of the newly-restarted Jamal Journal Newspaper.

Mumia and I are both deeply grateful for all of the support during both of Mumia's recent health emergencies (in March and April). As Mumia told Noelle Hanrahan during his first contact visit since his April heart surgery: "I am here because people stood right with me" (read on page 26).

People power forced the prison to have Mumia properly diagnosed and treated at an outside hospital. After returning from the hospital, Mumia told us that it was the best treatment he had ever received. This was a powerful victory for the

**Continued on page 27...**



PHOTO: Pam Africa marches past City Hall on July 4, 2002. Photo by AWOL Magazine / Philly IMC / Defenestrator.



*Each generation must, out of relative obscurity, discover its mission, and fulfill it or betray it.*  
- Frantz Fanon

First published by the SF Bay View Newspaper: "Young Panthers on the March" artwork by Kevin "Rashid" Johnson 264847 Wabash Valley Correctional Facility P.O. Box 500, Carlisle IN 47838

## **Elder Abuse: Incarceration Remains the Greatest Medical Threat to Mumia's Health –The Only Treatment is Freedom.**

Written by Doctor Ricardo Alvarez, Consulting Physician for Mumia Abu-Jamal

Mumia has survived a two vessel open heart surgery bypass graft. He is grateful for a new lease on life but his health remains fragile.

There is clear evidence that his chronic diseases of congestive heart failure, coronary artery disease, hypertension, diabetes and liver cirrhosis from Hepatitis C are the diseases of incarceration.

Incarceration is the primary social determinant of health. We know that there is documented evidence that incarcerated persons age earlier due to the physical and psychological stresses of survival. His only treatment

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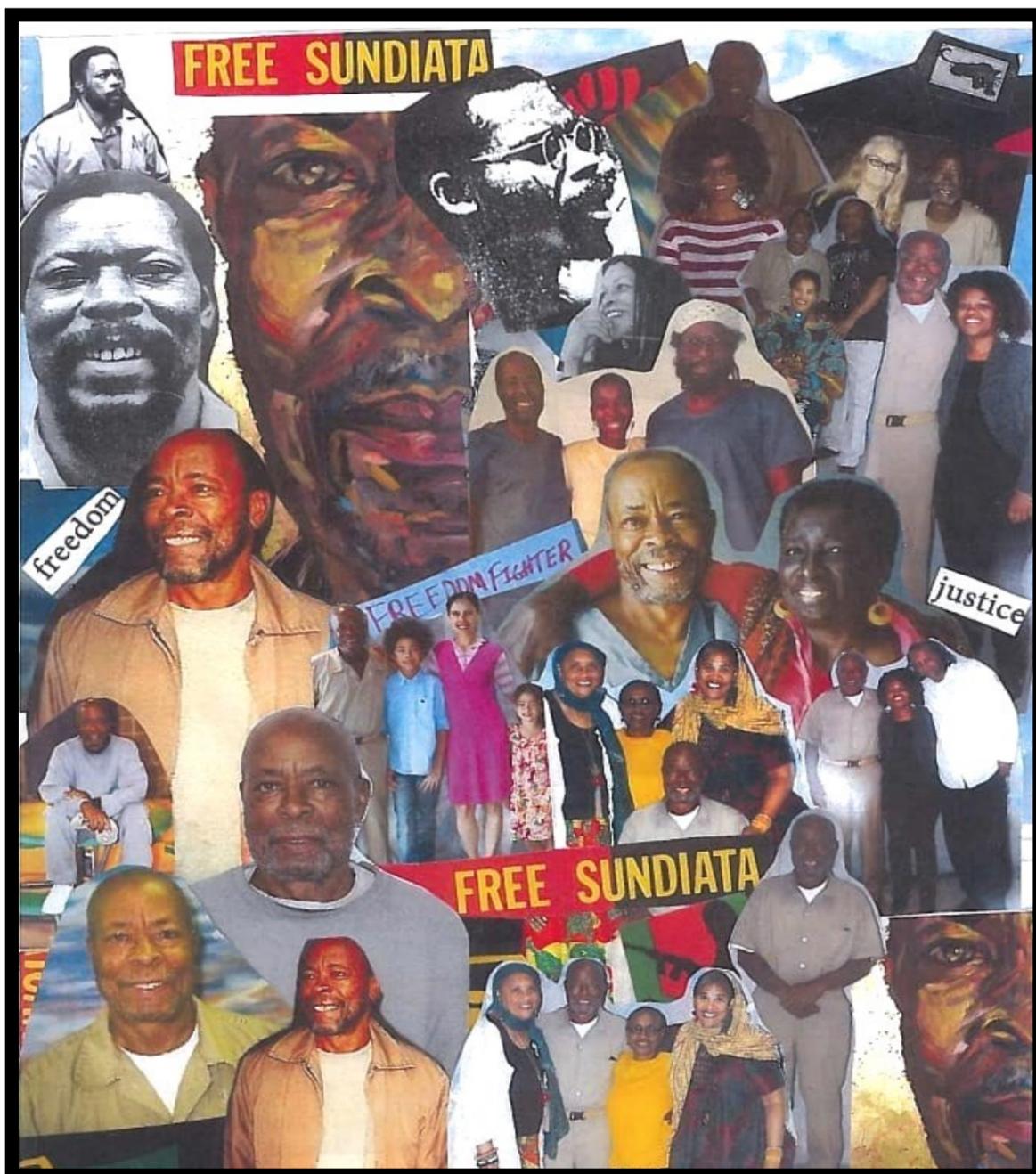
## **Mumia Abu-Jamal's Spiritual Advisor Confronts DA Krasner & the Fraternal Order of Police**

Professor Mark Lewis Taylor  
Interviewed by the Jamal Journal

(First published by the San Francisco Bay View National Black Newspaper on May 21, 2021. [www.sfbayview.com](http://www.sfbayview.com))

Mark Lewis Taylor has been a professor in religion and society at Princeton Theological Seminary since 1982. He is also the founder of Educators for Mumia Abu-Jamal (EMAJ), which was first known as Academics for Mumia Abu-Jamal (AMAJ). In 2007, he co-authored "20 FAQs: The Pedro Polakoff Crime Scene Photos" with Journalists for Mumia. In recent years, he has also been working as Mumia's spiritual advisor.

**Continued on page 8...**



Artwork by Yasmeen Sutton for #BringSundiataHome ([www.sundiataacoli.org](http://www.sundiataacoli.org))



**In the spirit of Mandela**  
International Tribunal on US Human Rights Violations  
[spiritofmandela.org](http://spiritofmandela.org) Oct. 22-24, 2021  
Virtual/New York

# Welcome to the Jamal Journal!

## Issue #2

(July, 2021)

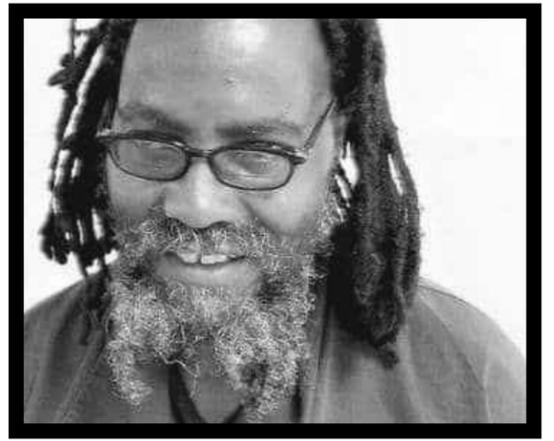
Special thanks to Truthout, WHYY, Angola 3 News, Prison Radio, The SF Bay View Newspaper, FAIR, Black Commentator, Toward Freedom, This Can't Be Happening!, Verso Books Blog, Black Power Media, Middle East Eye, El Enemigo Comun, Indybay and Workers World for granting us permission to reprint their articles!

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Telephone: (215) 724-1618  
[mobilization4mumia@gmail.com](mailto:mobilization4mumia@gmail.com)

Or write to us at:

Mobilization for Mumia  
c/o Philadelphia Progressive Coalition  
PO Box 8074  
Philadelphia, PA 19101



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**Publisher:** The uncompromising International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal (ICFFMAJ)

Pam Africa, ICFFMAJ Coordinator  
(267) 760-7344

**Editor:** Mumia Abu-Jamal

**Write Mumia:**

Mumia Abu-Jamal  
Smart Communications/PADOC  
Mumia Abu-Jamal AM 8335  
SCI Mahanoy  
PO Box 33028  
St Petersburg, FL 33733

**Take Action for Mumia Abu-Jamal:**

[www.letmumiaout.com](http://www.letmumiaout.com)

**ICFFMAJ's Network of Supporters:**

**Philadelphia:**

Mobilization 4 Mumia  
(215) 724-1618  
[mobilization4mumia@gmail.com](mailto:mobilization4mumia@gmail.com)  
[www.mobilization4mumia.com](http://www.mobilization4mumia.com)

**New York:**

Free Mumia Abu-Jamal Coalition (NYC)  
(212) 330-8029  
[info@freemumia.com](mailto:info@freemumia.com)  
[www.freemumia.com](http://www.freemumia.com)

Campaign to Bring Mumia Home  
(Philadelphia, NYC, Washington DC)  
[info@bringmumiahome.com](mailto:info@bringmumiahome.com)  
[www.bringmumiahome.com](http://www.bringmumiahome.com)

**California:**

Prison Radio  
(415) 648-4505  
[info@prisonradio.org](mailto:info@prisonradio.org)  
[www.prisonradio.org](http://www.prisonradio.org)

SF Bay Area Mobilization to Free Mumia  
(510) 268-9429  
[www.free-mumia.org](http://www.free-mumia.org)

Labor Action Committee to Free Mumia  
[www.laboractionmumia.org](http://www.laboractionmumia.org)

**France:**

Collectif Unitaire National De Soutien A Mumia Abu-Jamal  
Telephone: 01 53 38 99 99  
Fax: 01 40 40 90 98  
[contact@mumiabujamal.com](mailto:contact@mumiabujamal.com)  
[www.mumiabujamal.com](http://www.mumiabujamal.com)

International Solidarity Committee for Mumia Abu-Jamal and Political Prisoners (COSIMAPP), co-founder Julia Wright  
[julianahr1966@gmail.com](mailto:julianahr1966@gmail.com)

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## Romaine "Chip" Fitzgerald Returns to His Ancestors

Written by Mumia Abu-Jamal

May 28, 2021

The name Romaine "Chip" Fitzgerald is perhaps not widely known except for his supporters. In his wild youth decades ago, he was a teenage member of the LA chapter of the Black Panther Party, which he joined after a brief stint in jail. He was a wild boy at a wild time in history, the sixties, when it seemed like the very world was on fire.

Chip once fell in with a crew of wild boys who were full of mischief, which landed him in reform school, known as Juvenile Hall, run by the California Youth Authority. Chip's youthful rebelliousness led to stints in solitary where, now surrounded by silence, he read about and became captivated by the black freedom movement.

These articles awakened him to the existence of the Black Panther Party, the boldest of black freedom movements in the sixties era. Upon his 1969 release, Romaine Chip Fitzgerald formally joined the militant revolutionary organization. Chip took to the party like a fish takes to water by helping its free breakfast programs, selling Panther newspapers, and assisting in other party programs.

According to others who joined at the same time, Chip was an enthusiastic member, and more importantly, his mother proudly supported his new commitment to community work.

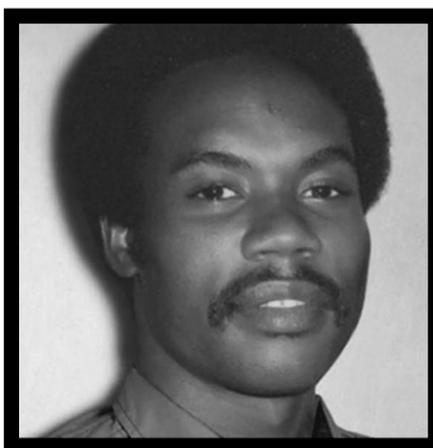


PHOTO: "Chip" Fitzgerald.

But good times sometimes don't remain good, for 1969 marked Chip's involvement in two shootings, leaving one victim dead. It also marked his return to prison as an adult. These charges, and California's antipathy towards Black Panthers, led to Chip's incarceration for 52 years despite his eligibility for parole in 1976.

On March 28, 2021, Chip who suffered from a massive stroke, passed away in a California hospital while lying in shackles. Chip was the longest held ex-Black Panther in America. Romaine Chip Fitzgerald, after over a half century in chains, returns to his ancestors.

## March 18, 2021 Update From Mumia's Lawyers Judith Ritter and Sam Spital

Yesterday we filed our reply brief in Superior Court in support of Mumia's claims in the re-opened appeals. We focused on four arguments:

(a) the Court's jurisdiction to hear this case notwithstanding the Pennsylvania Supreme Court's decision in Reid that most petitioners seeking to re-open their cases post Williams v. Pennsylvania cannot do so because their claims are not timely;

(b) trial counsel's ineffectiveness in failing to present evidence that Robert Chobert was on probation at the time of his trial testimony;

(c) the admissibility of Yvette Williams's declaration reporting what Cynthia White said to hear about lying against Mumia; and

(d) racial discrimination in jury selection in violation of Batson.

Also yesterday, Maureen Faulkner sought permission, again, to intervene in the Superior Court. Essentially her argument is that the DA is not in her view raising—or at least not vigorously raising—a jurisdictional/timeliness argument, which she says reflects ongoing bias and the need for disqualification.

## May 20, 2021 Legal Update by Professor Johanna Fernández, From the Legal Team

The Superior Court of PA claims it has no jurisdiction over the issues raised in the latest litigation in this case. Therefore this court has transferred all the pending issues to the PA Supreme Court....The issues that the Superior Court is relinquishing to the PA Supreme Court are :

1. Mumia's open appeals
2. Request by Mumia's attorneys to remand the case to the Court of Common Pleas, to investigate the new evidence found in the 6 boxes
3. Maureen's petition to intervene in Mumia's open appeals .



PHOTO: Mumia embraces his wife Wadiya after being transferred off death row in 2012.

## A Case for Mumia Abu-Jamal's Innocence

Written by The Campaign to Bring Mumia Home ([www.BringMumiaHome.com](http://www.BringMumiaHome.com))

### Who is Mumia?

Mumia is a revolutionary journalist. He has been writing since age 15, first as Minister of Information for the Philadelphia chapter of the Black Panther Party (1969-1971), then for numerous Philadelphia radio and print venues, including National Public Radio.

His journalism was featured in mainstream venues, but he refused to forget those whom corporate media routinely neglect. He was especially noted for covering police harassment of the MOVE organization, while other journalists ignored it.

His writings, today, after 39 years in prison, now fill twelve books and thousands of radio and print columns in publications ranging from homeless "street news" papers to Forbes magazine and the Yale Law Review.

### Mumia Served Nearly 30 Yrs. on Death Row

Mumia was confined for three decades on Pennsylvania's death row before federal courts ruled "unconstitutional" the death sentence he received at age 27 for the shooting death of Philadelphia police officer, Daniel Faulkner. He now is serving a "Life Without Parole" sentence in Pennsylvania's general prison population.

### Mumia is The United States' Most Internationally Renowned Political Prisoner

Mumia is known worldwide as a political prisoner, because of the political context of his arrest, sentencing and imprisonment.

He was arrested, tried, convicted and sentenced in the era of rampant police brutality, and also of activists' resistance, under former Philadelphia Mayor Frank Rizzo.

In that period, Mumia uncompromisingly reported on police brutality and racism, exposing officials' brutal assaults on the MOVE family & organization, and on other national and international revolutionary movements.

When he was found already shot at the scene of Officer Faulkner's shooting, police brutally beat Mumia beyond recognition, then charged him with the officer's shooting. He has been imprisoned ever since, on the basis of a trial

that systematically denied him due process, involving prosecutors' withholding of evidence, racial bias in juror selection, and a judge's rampant bias.

Further, higher courts have routinely rejected Mumia's numerous appeals on the basis of exceptional rulings that denied him the courtesy of court precedents that often were extended to others who lodged the same appeals on the same grounds.

### Mumia is a Framed Man

A charge of killing a police officer is the hardest rap to beat, even when innocent, especially for a revolutionary activist of color. Nevertheless, the arguments for Mumia's innocence are some of the strongest that can be made. He has maintained his innocence from the very beginning and to this day. Independent journalists researching his case have set forth cogent grounds that Abu-Jamal was framed (e.g. Patrick O'Connor, *The Framing of Mumia Abu-Jamal*, 2008).

Amnesty International, in its extensive analysis of the case in 2000, called for "a new trial," holding that the original trial "was irredeemably tainted by politics and race and failed to meet international fair trial standards."

Even a lawyer writing for the mainstream *American Lawyer* magazine, who was prone to call Mumia "guilty," nevertheless still summarized at length the evidence for a police frame-up, announcing, "I'm joining the 'Save Mumia' movement, here and now" (Stuart Taylor, Jr., *American Lawyer*, December 1, 1995).

### Mumia's Case is a Primer for What Many Others Suffer

Mumia's case is a veritable primer on the kinds of abuse suffered by the black, brown and poor in the U.S. today. What happened to Mumia foregrounds starkly what many suffer in police encounters, in dealings with prosecutors, in trial and appellate courts, and in U.S. jails, prisons and detention centers. Consider these links, below, between Mumia's own experience and what is suffered by others in the U.S. today:

(1) Like so many others' bodies, Mumia's body was subjected to a brutal beating by police, on the street and in his

ambulance on way to the hospital, before any determination of guilt was even attempted. He was black, brown, poor – therefore, vulnerable and beaten. Before that, he was subject to numerous cases of "stop and frisk" harassment.

(2) As seen by all too many of the poor, today, who stand before judges, the prosecutors suppress evidence that might work in favor of defendants.

In Mumia's case, the fact of a fourth person being at the crime scene, who was the likely perpetrator (Kenneth Freeman) was never considered by Mumia's jury. The prosecutor in Mumia's case acknowledged during another trial that this fourth person was present at the crime scene where Mumia was arrested and beaten.

Both police and prosecutors also suppressed an independent journalist's photographs of the crime scene. Taken by Pedro Polakoff, these were the first photos taken at the scene. They disprove key points in the state's case and raise numerous other questions undermining the coherence of prosecutors' case. These were never made available to the defense or jurors despite the photographer's offering them to both police and prosecutors.

(3) As experienced by many defendants of color, in Mumia's trial the D.A. used 10-11 of its 15 "peremptory challenges" to target black jurors for removal from potential service on Mumia's jury. This left Mumia, from a community that was overwhelmingly black, with a "jury of his peers" that was over 2/3 white.

Five years after Mumia's trial, a video training tape came to light detailing D.A. strategies to intentionally keep black jurors off juries when there are black defendants.

(4) Along with many others, Mumia has suffered harsh constraints of the Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act of 1996 that regulates the appeals process above the state level. This 1996 act, passed when some of Mumia's strongest challenges to Pennsylvania's courts were in process, limited federal powers of review over state court decisions. This effectively blocked Mumia's chances, and those of others, in their attempts to gain relief for even their strong claims. Many of the 198 currently on Pennsylvania's death row, and

among the more than 3,000 on U.S. death rows, have been at the mercy of state courts ever since this 1996 Act.

But Mumia has suffered this limitation acutely in his state, having his appeals denied repeatedly while others' appeals have been granted for the same claims! A federal judge on the U.S. Third Circuit Court of Appeals himself noted this fact. The repeated practice of this denial to Mumia came to be called "the Mumia exception."

(5) Along with numerous others throughout Pennsylvania, Mumia faced a biased judge who had an unusually high number of his capital trial decisions reversed. That judge, Albert Sabo, also had been a member of a police union (the Fraternal Order of Police) and was heard in a court anteroom by a court stenographer to say of his work at Mumia's trial, "Yeah, and I'm gonna help 'em fry the n\_\_\_\_\_."

(6) Like all too many who go to trial without good defense counsel, Mumia was convicted in the absence of basic forensic evidence. The bullet that killed Officer Faulkner could not conclusively be matched to Abu-Jamal's gun. The police also failed to perform routine tests on Abu-Jamal's hands, which would have determined whether he had even shot a gun that night.

(7) Finally, and again like the experiences of many others in Philadelphia, Mumia's arrest and trial conviction were secured in an era when city police corruption was rampant. Less than two years before Mumia's trial, the Department of Justice, in an unprecedented move filed a lawsuit against the Mayor and 21 city and police officials for abuse that "shocks the conscience" (the lawsuit's words).

The officers who arrested and later brutalized Mumia came from the 6th District, which was under yet another federal investigation for police corruption, approved by the U.S. Attorney General under Ronald Reagan.

As a result, fully a third of the 35 officers involved in Mumia's case, including the top officer at the crime scene, Inspector Alfonzo Giordano, were subsequently convicted of corruption, extortion and tampering with evidence to obtain convictions.

# Albert Woodfox of the Angola 3 and Mumia Abu-Jamal Interview Each Other

Recorded by Prison Radio on April 23, 2021

**Mumia:** *You brothers of the Angola Three did an ungodly bit in the hole. How did the state justify locking you cats up for so long?*

**Albert:** Well, given the unchecked and unchallenged power of the prison system in Louisiana, their basic justification was the fact that Herman, Robert and I were fighting for our humanity, fighting to maintain our dignity, pride, self-respect and self-worth.

They thought that was a threat to what they considered the only function of a prison. So that was the justification. The infamous Warden Burl Cain even signed a deposition one time saying that I was the most dangerous man in America, and since I've been out, I would like to think that my activities have proven him to be right.

**Mumia:** *How did y'all endure 40 years in the hole?*

**Albert:** Ha! That's the most difficult question of all. I guess having a political consciousness that came from being members of the Black Panther Party. They say knowledge is power, and we had a sense of what solitary confinement was designed for. And so over the decades, it was just having strength, determination, values and principles. And we stayed active, you know. We looked to the society for inspiration, to the men and women, and in some cases the children, to peo-

ple fighting for changes in conditions, rather than turn our attention inside and allow prison culture to set examples about how we should live our lives.

**Mumia:** *What gave y'all hope?*

**Albert:** I had a wonderful family, you know, wonderful comrades who made up the International Coalition to Free the Angola 3, and we had a great legal team. But more than anything, what gave me hope was being with the guys I lived around, seeing people in society and the social struggles that were being waged, the sacrifices that were being made, the indomitable spirit that refused to be broken. Those were some of the things that inspired me.

One thing in particular was the development of the Black Lives Matter movement, you know, which I think is a tremendous movement. And I was so proud to see all the young men and women involved in that movement come forward.

After getting out of prison and before the pandemic, when Robert and I were traveling together and speaking, we always asked the host to make it possible for us to meet some of the young leaders in the movement. So those are the things that gave me hope, you know, a lot of love of humanity, the indomitable spirit of the people and the continuous struggle that was going on in society.

**Albert:** *Mumia my brother, given*

*the preponderance of evidence exonerating you and the lack of evidence against you, how does it feel to still be in prison?*

**Mumia:** Brother Albert, in the spirit of the Angola 3, I salute you. You know, I think of the early days, even before my trial began, of a pretrial hearing. I'd read a law book, showing cases from the U.S. Supreme Court. So the hearing was based on the Constitution, right? Well, I went to the law library, read those actual cases and then drew up motions. I made a motion in court. The court promptly denied this motion.

I couldn't believe it! But it made me understand the court that most people meet when they first have a case, wasn't bound by the Constitution or by Supreme Court rulings. They do whatever they want to do, because it really ain't about the law. It's about power.

Judge Sabo would later say, and I mean in open court 15 years later, in my case, "Justice is just an emotional feeling." To quote Malcolm X: "Don't be shocked when I say I was in prison. Long as you south of the Canadian border, you still in prison, so all power to people."



PHOTO: Albert Woodfox enjoys a canoe ride shortly after his February 19, 2016 release.

**Albert:** *My brother, what was your most painful personal loss?*

**Mumia:** The loss of my mother and daughter, Edith and Samiyah. I had dreams of walking with both of them in freedom. And of course, with other family members, brothers, sisters, cousins, brothers-in-law, Lydia, Jimmy. They live in our memory and in our hearts.

**Albert:** *Again my brother, what is your number one priority when freedom finally comes?*

**Mumia:** The same as it's always been: To serve the people, to work on their behalf, to work for a world where true Black Liberation is a reality, not just words. As the Rastas say: freedom is a must.

Thank you brother Woodfox.

## "They Did Not Break Me"—A Review of Albert Woodfox's 2019 Autobiography

Written by Carolina Saldaña from Amigxs de Mumia en Mexico

Albert Woodfox got out of prison on February 19, 2016, after spending 43 years in isolation, that is to say, in solitary confinement. Robert Hillary King had been released on February 8, 2001, and Herman Wallace on October 1, 2013, three days before he died of cancer. They are known as the "Angola 3" for organizing a chapter of the Black Panthers in a prison widely recognized as the most violent in the country on a former slave plantation in Angola, Louisiana, which continued to function in much the same way.

In this autobiographical work, Albert Woodfox tells us of his childhood and youth in the Black community of Tremé in New Orleans, his incarceration in Angola and other prisons, his dawning consciousness, and the work of the Angola 3. He writes about what they achieved in conditions of torture and white supremacy as well as the support they received from the New Orleans Panthers and others. At every step of the way, he reflects on his anxieties, hits and misses, and what he learned.

Albert and Herman were framed for the murder of prison guard Brent Williams, and King was set up for the murder of another prisoner in Angola. All were given life sentences. For years, the three fought their own cases as they worked to organize a chapter of the Black Panthers, struggling to bring about changes in the conditions in the fields, and against the prison sex-trade business and body-cavity strip searches. They organized an anti-rape squad and held a long hunger strike against the filthy conditions in which food was delivered. They also encouraged self-education and led study groups.

The Angola 3 spent decades in solitary confinement, both in the unit known as Closed Cell Restriction (CCR) and in even harsher areas such as the infamous Camp J. They knew

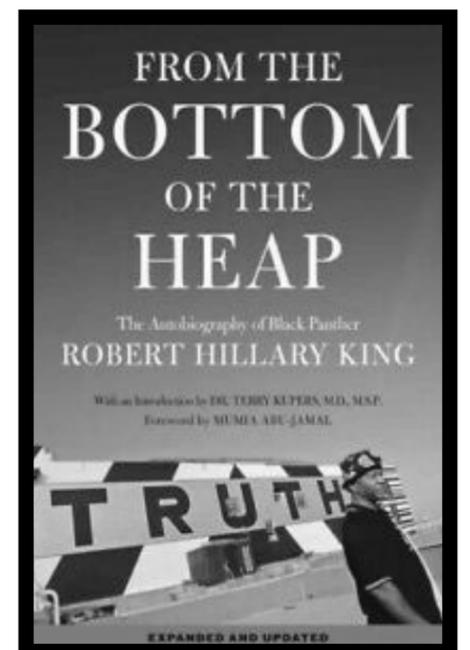
from their own experience that solitary confinement was torture and began to organize protests, write about it and initiate lawsuits in the courts. Their struggles were repeatedly opposed by Angola prison director Burl Cain and Louisiana Attorney General Buddy Caldwell, who both argued that Albert and Herman could not be allowed to live in the general population because they would be stirring up the other prisoners with their "Black Pantherism."

As the false charges against the Angola 3 became more widely known, they gained new supporters including former political prisoner Geronimo Ji Jaga, Anita Roddick in England, U. S. Representative John Conyers and the widow of Brent Miller, Leontine "Teenie" Rogers.

After King was released in 2001, he worked nonstop with New Orleans Panther Malik Rahim, other former Panthers and activists, and a team of excellent lawyers to free Herman and Albert.

Herman's death immediately after his release in 2013 was heartbreaking for Albert and King, and they carried his legacy with them as they worked for and finally gained Albert's freedom on his birthday in 2016.

After spending time with family and friends, Albert visited Yosemite National Park – something he had always



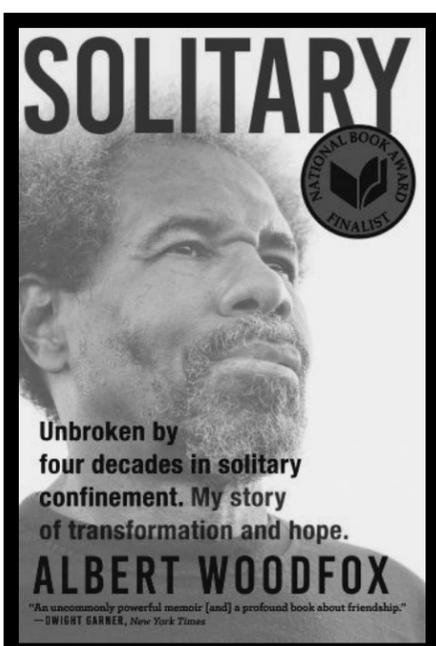
dreamed about.

Since then, Albert and King have traveled all over the world, talking about their experiences and building a movement to end the torture of solitary confinement.

Albert says: "Don't give up... For 44 years I defied the state of Louisiana and the Department of Corrections. Their main objective was to break my spirit. They did not break me... I did not lose my humanity.

I bear the scars of beatings, loneliness, isolation and persecution. I am also marked by every kindness."

(Visit: [www.angola3news.com](http://www.angola3news.com))



# Free Yaqui Political Prisoner Fidencio Aldama!

By Carolina Saldaña from Amigxs de Mumia en México (www.amigosdemumiamx.blog)

The Yaqui political prisoner Fidencio Aldama Pérez has spent more than four years in prison in Sonora, Mexico, for a crime he did not commit. Without a bit of evidence against him, this member of the Community Guard in the town of 1,500 people, Loma de Bâcum, has been sentenced to 18 years in prison for allegedly shooting and killing an intruder.

In truth, Fidencio is condemned for taking part in community resistance against a natural gas pipeline on Yaqui territory with a station in his town, one of many megaprojects that contaminate, privatize, plunder and destroy the lands of indigenous peoples. The Sonora Pipeline is part of a larger network for moving natural gas from the United States into Mexico. The Semptra Energy Company based in San Diego operates through its Mexican subsidiary IEnora, which has invested more than 8,769 billion dollars in the country, and bought off a number of the leaders in other towns in surrounding Yaqui territory with money, water purifiers, fancy cars and pickup trucks.

According to the Fidencio Aldama Support Group, before being unjustly imprisoned, Fidencio loved to play soccer with his children and neighbors. The talented singer and musician plays the guitar, bass, accordion, and flute. He has long practiced, taught and

strengthened the culture and traditions of the Yaqui people by playing guitar in traditional Yaqui ceremonies and participating in communal dances. His vision is that of a Yaqui territory that fully belongs to the Yaqui people and from which no one can be displaced.

It was the women of Loma de Bâcum who headed up the resistance against the destruction of their small town. They took the lead in exposing the plans for the pipeline as a violation of territorial integrity that would affect homes, plots of land, streams, vegetation, and drainage ditches, and would cause severe environmental, social, and cultural damage. They won support from women in four other towns. They organized a community consultation, and the majority of people in Loma Bâcum said no, they didn't want the pipeline. They went through legal procedures and won an injunction in which a judge suspended construction and ordered the removal of the pipeline. But the construction company ignored the judge's order and continued to build it. It became obvious that the people themselves would have to stop it. In October of 2017, the company invaded Loma de Bâcum with an enormous excavator, a sign that it was ready to impose its will on the community. But this was not to be.

In a community assembly the townspeople came up with a highly original plan and immediately began to put it into action. They seized the excavator, dug down deep into the earth until they reached the pipeline, used a blowtorch to cut it into little pieces, then took these to Ciudad Obregón, and sold them as scrap metal. There would be no pipeline station in Loma de Bâcum.

It didn't take long for reprisals to begin. On October 21, 2017, a group of more than 500 heavily armed men from other Yaqui towns rode into Loma de Bâcum firing on everybody and everything that moved. As community people responded in kind, one of the intruders was killed. A week later Fidencio Aldama was arrested, charged with homicide and immediately locked up in prison. It was only after he was in custody that he was shown an alleged arrest warrant. The evidence

against him consisted of a picture of Fidencio carrying a pistol as a member of the Community Guard. But the pistol that he carried was of a different caliber than that of the gun used to kill the assailant.

Since then, Fidencio's wife Carmen and her family have organized support for him as they continue to oppose the plans of government and industry to reap untold profits from Yaqui territory. Meanwhile, the men, women and children of the community are engaged in the agroecological planting of vegetable gardens. From his prison cell, Fidencio has held a

hunger strike, organized support among other prisoners, and written one letter after another to the relevant authorities against his unjust imprisonment and against the web of pipelines geared to violate Yaqui territory. Executives of IEnora have railed against the acts of opposition to the pipeline and filed suit in a court of law.

"If you continue building the pipeline, we are going to continue selling it as scrap metal," said Guadalupe Maldonado Flores, a Yaqui comrade.

## A Call for Letters and Artwork for Fidencio

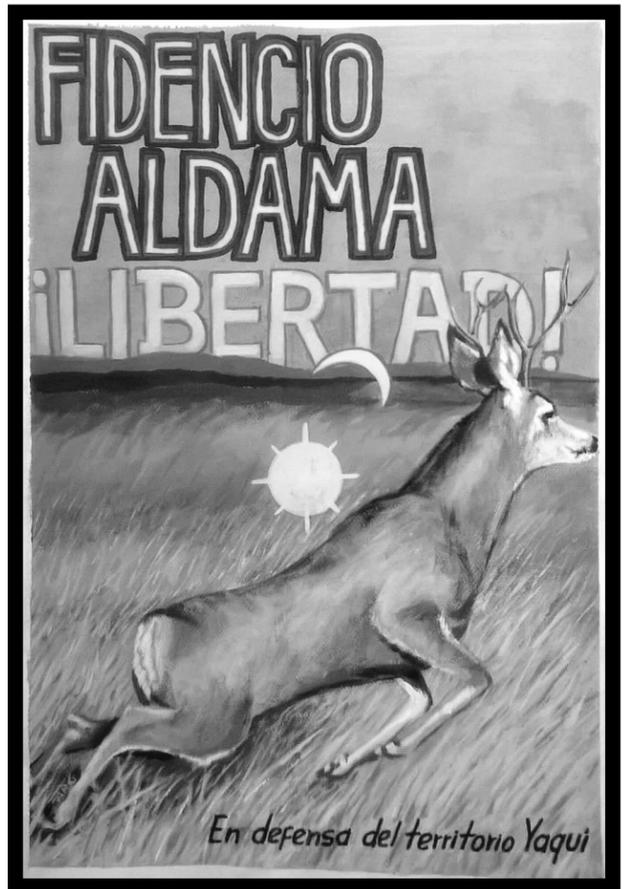
From June 20 to 26, 2021, the Fidencio Aldama Support Group is calling for art creation and letter writing in solidarity with Fidencio and his community in struggle, Loma de Bâcum. Please create a piece of art or write a letter to Fidencio during this week.

How to do it? The support group sends these specifications:

### Letter Writing:

Because Fidencio cannot receive mail in prison, the support group will be collecting all letters and ensuring that they are hand-delivered to him. Please email a photo of your letter to: [fidenciolibre@protonmail.com](mailto:fidenciolibre@protonmail.com).

While Fidencio may not be able to reply to all letters, if you would like, please include your contact info either within the letter or separately in the email. As always, be aware that the State will also be reading your letter. Fidencio speaks Spanish and Jiaki.



However, letters in English are also welcome and encouraged. The support group will translate them into Spanish and will translate any replies into English.

### Artwork:

- Please use letter or A4-sized paper for your work.
- Scan your work using a resolution of 300 to 600 dpi.
- Save the work as a .tiff or .png file.
- Email your work to us at [fidenciolibre@protonmail.com](mailto:fidenciolibre@protonmail.com).
- Let us know if it's okay to share your work, create stickers, posters, t-shirts or more out of it, and how you would like to be credited.

Although this letter and art campaign is scheduled for one week, your letters to Fidencio in the coming months will be greatly appreciated and are a way to help win his release. Please don't hesitate to write to him.

### New Bilingual Website

In April of this year a new website in Spanish and English was launched to expand solidarity efforts with Fidencio Aldama, his family, and the community of Loma de Bâcum. At this site, you can download information, updates photos and videos on his case and the ongoing work to obtain his freedom. You can also see where to write Fidencio a letter or donate money to his solidarity fund — a direct way to help with legal costs and material support.

Visit: [www.fidencioaldama.org](http://www.fidencioaldama.org)



PHOTO: Fidencio behind the prison walls.

## Albert Woodfox & Robert King of the Angola 3 support the Color of Change petition to DA Krasner

Written March 18, 2021

The A3 are calling on all people to sign the Color of Change petition as we continue to demand the immediate release of Mumia Abu-Jamal.

Mumia's case has always been a travesty of justice and he has suffered ill health in recent years. Now Mumia is suffering from Covid 19, in addition

to congestive heart failure, liver cirrhosis and a painful skin condition.

He has been locked up for 39 years - 30 of them in solitary confinement. This is nothing less than torture.

Mumia is a journalist, author, activist, prisoner mentor, friend, father and grandfather.

He has always fought for all of our

human rights from inside prison walls. Please fight for his human rights today.

Mumia! We stand with you, along with millions.

All Power to the People!

Albert Woodfox and Robert King (A3) (PHOTO: Robert H King' walks out of the prison gates in 2001.)



# Activists Counter Anti-Asian Violence Through Community Safety Initiatives: “Policing has never been an effective response to violence because the police are agents of white supremacy”

Written by Victoria Law, Truthout.org

March 24, 2021

Stop AAPI Hate, a national coalition formed to address anti-Asian violence during the pandemic, reported that Asians and Asian Americans reported approximately 3,800 racist incidents, including threats and physical attacks, this past year. More than two-thirds of those reports were about violence against Asian women.

Reported anti-Asian violence has soared since Donald Trump initially blamed the coronavirus on China, calling it “the China virus” and “kung flu” from his bully pulpit as president. Even after his ouster from the White House, his remarks linking the coronavirus with China continues to spark harassment, threats and violence against Asians and Asian Americans across the U.S.

On March 16, this violence caught national attention after suspected gunman Robert Aaron Long, a white 21-year-old, opened fire on three Atlanta-area massage parlors, killing eight, six of whom were Asian and Asian American women. Long’s arrest did not deter others from engaging in random violence against Asians, particularly those seen as vulnerable. The following day in San Francisco, a 39-year-old white man reportedly attacked first an 83-year-old Vietnamese man, and then attacked 75-year-old Xiao Zhen Xie, who picked up a stick and fought back, sending her assailant to the hospital handcuffed to a gurney. Xie, who was also taken to the hospital for treatment, suffered two black eyes, one of which is still swollen and cannot open, as well as severe post-traumatic stress disorder from the unprovoked attack. In New York City, five attacks were reported over the weekend.

Politicians in cities with large Asian populations have condemned these assaults, calling for increased policing. Police departments have announced they will increase policing in Asian communities. These announcements have been denounced by many Asian

and Asian American advocacy organizations, which have noted that law enforcement, including police and immigration authorities, have not kept their communities or residents safe, and instead act as perpetrators of racialized and xenophobic violence.

Calls for policing ignore community-based safety efforts, both those created over the past year as well as more long-standing efforts.

They also ignore the long history of systemic violence against Asians and Asian Americans. In the week that followed the shootings, marches, protests and mass demonstrations were held across the U.S.; in many, attendees called for an end to anti-Asian violence while also rejecting calls for more policing.

On March 18, two days after the shooting, more than 200 racial justice, sex worker, and a wide variety of advocacy organizations co-signed a statement by Red Canary Song, a New York City-based collective of Asian sex workers, massage workers and allies, highlighting the stigma against sex work, as well as the racialized and gendered nature of the Atlanta attack, and refuting the claim that police provide safety.

“Policing has never been an effective response to violence because the police are agents of white supremacy,” the statement read. “Policing has never kept sex workers or massage workers or immigrants safe.”

Red Canary Song was created in response to police violence against sex workers and massage workers. In November 2017, police raided a massage parlor in Flushing, New York. Yang



PHOTO: Anti-AAPI violence protest in Philadelphia on March 25. These signs depict Xiao Zhen Xie, the 75-year-old Asian woman who fought off an attacker in San Francisco. Photo by Jamal Journal staff photographer Betsey Piette.

Song, a 38-year-old massage worker, fell to her death from a fourth-floor apartment when police attempted to arrest her for allegedly engaging in sex work. Song had previously been sexually assaulted by a person claiming to be a police officer and arrested on sex work allegations two months before.

Red Canary Song initially formed to provide legal support for Song’s family and assist with funeral expenses. The group then expanded to offer support for other massage workers, connecting them with legal help and medical resources. Organizers also worked with other groups to monitor the city’s human trafficking courts and joined Decrim New York, a coalition demanding that New York decriminalize sex work.

By the time COVID hit the U.S., Red Canary Song had built relationships through two years of door-knocking, assistance and advocacy. Learning that many of their contacts had lost income, the collective shifted to mutual aid efforts — providing groceries and cash assistance to out-of-work massage workers on a bimonthly basis.

Yves Nguyen, a Red Canary Song organizer, told Truthout that the organization typically plans to provide groceries and cash to 50 people, but at times, more people show up than anticipated, forcing volunteers to recalculate both funds and food on the fly.

“Our big dream is community support,” Nguyen said, adding that Red Canary Song would like to see “more community-designated resources, not just our small collective handing out groceries and giving out cash aid.” This dream goes hand in hand with decriminalization, which would prevent police from exploiting and assaulting people who engage in massage work, regardless of whether they are also engaging in sex work.

Meanwhile, “mutual aid is keeping people safe [by] meeting people’s needs in the immediate that are not

being met by the systems that are in place,” Nguyen said, noting that these same systems criminalize Asian migrants, including massage workers, assuming that they are all engaged in criminalized activity. “We’re meeting people’s needs by giving them money, food, supplies, etc., so that they can survive and build and transform the world.”

## “Call on Me, Not the Cops”

In February 2021, after a video of a young Black man violently shoving a 91-year-old Asian man went viral, actors Daniel Dae Kim and Daniel Wu offered a \$25,000 reward for information about the assailant(s). Their offer drew criticism from Asian and Asian American organizers, who compared it to a bounty at the expense of Black people upholding the white supremacist policing system that systematically targets and kills Black people.

Cayden Mak, executive director of 18 Million Rising, a national digital advocacy organization for Asian Americans, noted that the actors’ offer “completely takes agency away from the community. Asian American community orgs have been working on police alternatives here for ages.”

18 Million Rising began in 2012, the same year that Florida teenager Trayvon Martin was murdered. His death immediately set the stage for the group to challenge members to think about safety beyond policing. At the same time, organizers partnered with groups supporting people in prison and immigrant detention, writing letters to incarcerated and detained people and participating in anti-deportation campaigns.

“White supremacy is invested in pitting us against each other,” Mak told Truthout. In 2020, 18 Million Rising put out “Call On Me, Not The Cops.” It was an abolitionist tool for Asians and Asian Americans to use when talk-

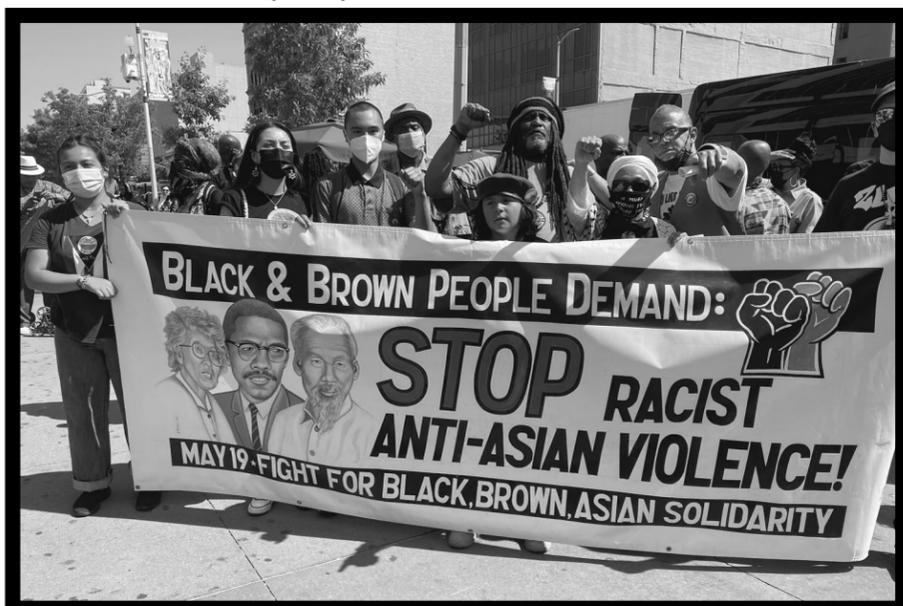


PHOTO: Pam Africa in Harlem, New York City on May 19, 2021

Continued on page 7...

**...Continued from page 6:  
Countering Anti-Asian Violence**

ing with family members about safety, policing and police violence against Black people. It also served as a way to talk about the racial divides encouraged by decades of government policies restricting resources, sensationalist media stories pitting Black and Asian communities against one another, and fears about street violence.

The letter, which is available in 12 languages, notes the desire for safety — and that that desire should not come at the expense of Black lives. “We want the world to be safer, and that means changing what we do,” it states, urging family members to call each other, a friend or a neighbor when they are scared or need help. “Calling someone else instead of the police is a safer option for you and everyone involved. I want you to know I love and care for you and we can make a safety plan together that doesn’t involve the police.”

Mak also points to ongoing efforts in Oakland to ensure community safety — efforts that would have benefited greatly from Kim’s and Wu’s \$25,000 offer. This includes the Community Ambassador Program, originally established by Asian Health Services and the Asian Prisoner Support Committee, to allow formerly incarcerated people to rebuild their relationships with the community. Now, members, who are not always formerly incarcerated, act as volunteer patrols to both deter random street violence and help residents, including acting as escorts to elders and others on their daily errands around the neighborhood.

**“We’re Here for Our Community”**

There is a rich (and often underreported) history of cross-racial solidarity in the US. Some of the newer safety efforts continue that legacy.

In Oakland, Jacob Azevedo, a 26-year-old Latino, put out a call to provide an escort to anyone in Chinatown who felt unsafe on the streets. Four others immediately responded to his call and in February 2021, Compassion in Oakland was created. The group now has hundreds of volunteers who work in pods to escort seniors and other vulnerable people on their daily errands, as well as provide translation services and help those with limited English or computer skills.

In New York, what started as a safety initiative to prevent assaults against women quickly expanded to encompass safety for Chinatown residents. Peter Kerre, a Black Brooklyn resident and founder of Street Riders NYC, saw photos of several women who had been badly beaten at the Morgan Avenue subway station in Brooklyn. Kerre put out a call on social media for volunteers to escort residents who felt unsafe. Hundreds responded. Now, people who need an escort can send a message in English, Chinese or Spanish through SafeWalks NYC’s webpage or Instagram and be walked

home by a pair of escorts sporting bright yellow and orange safety vests.

In February, SafeWalks expanded to Manhattan’s Chinatown, where volunteers spread the word through fliers and word-of-mouth. “We’re here for our community and ready to go into the fire, not to fight but to just show up for our neighbors,” Kerre told *Bushwick Daily*. “It’s about compassion.”

**“We Have to Build Relationships”**

The Massage Parlor Outreach Project (MPOP) began in 2018 to support massage workers in Seattle’s Chinatown/International District. Organizers took inspiration from labor organizers in Hong Kong and China, who utilized hot pot and shared meals to cultivate space for worker resistance.

In 2019, the Seattle Police Department raided nearly a dozen massage parlors on the pretext of rescuing trafficking victims. But, said MPOP organizer Shuxuan, the people arrested were charged not with trafficking, but with money laundering and promoting prostitution. Those not arrested were displaced, leaving them more vulnerable to economic exploitation and violence.

The raids pushed MPOP organizers to organize around safety in spite of policing and raids. But doing so, Shuxuan told *Truthout*, meant building relationships, a process that takes time. “If we don’t have trust, then no matter what happens, they won’t look [to us] for support. We need to build relationships before another raid or deportation happens.”

MPOP visited massage workers each month, bringing care packages containing candy, fruits and feminine hygiene supplies. Each package also contained a zine in Chinese with information about Seattle labor laws and health care, including places that did not ask about immigration status.

When COVID hit, MPOP continued visiting on a bimonthly basis. The group included information in Chinese about COVID, including prevention, testing and now vaccinations, as well as local politics, such as the Black Lives Matter/Defund the Police protests that were either underreported or demonized in Chinese-language media. Shuxuan said that many of the workers saw their incomes drop by half or even two-thirds; some began asking for MPOP’s assistance in navigating unemployment insurance or for assistance applying for small-business grants.

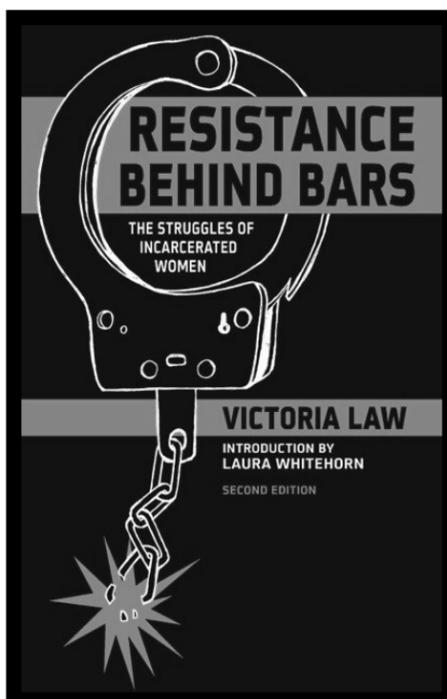
The day after the Atlanta shootings, Shuxuan and other MPOP organizers visited the dozen massage parlors that remain in the International District. Half of the workers they spoke to had not heard about the shootings, which had yet to be covered in the Chinese-language media. Those who had felt unsafe. COVID had already decreased the number of workers in some parlors; in one instance, a woman was attacked by a man who noticed that she often appeared to be the only person work-

ing in the parlor. They discussed safety strategies — leaving for work earlier, walking with their boyfriends, and being more cautious when opening the door to an unknown client. Some suggested that community-based patrols and self-defense classes would help. None said they wanted more policing.

At 9:30 am on Monday, March 22, approximately 200 people gathered at Seattle’s Hing Hay Park for a vigil commemorating those killed in Atlanta. The morning vigil was scheduled so that massage workers could attend before work. The attendees included Native organizers with the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, who tied the shootings to the legacy of colonialism, as well as Black sex workers who showed up in solidarity for their Asian sisters.

Incarcerated Asian and Pacific Islanders penned a solidarity statement (which did not arrive before the vigil). “The message is about cross-racial solidarity,” Shuxuan reflected. “We all need to see white supremacy and colonialism as the enemy.”

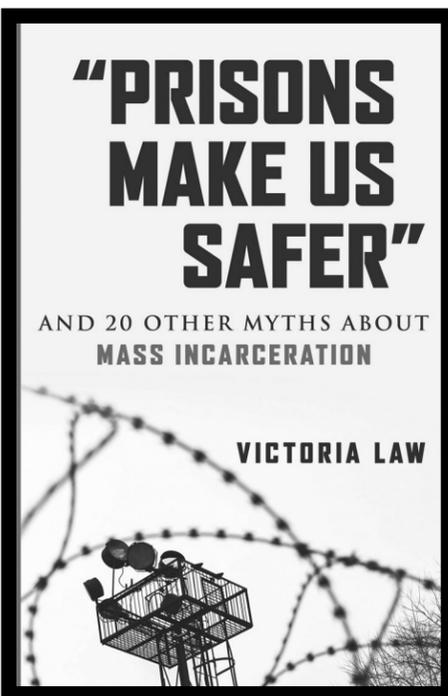
—*Victoria Law is a freelance journalist and author. She frequently writes about the intersections between mass incarceration, gender and resistance. Her website is: [www.victorialaw.net](http://www.victorialaw.net)*



[www.resistancebehindbars.org](http://www.resistancebehindbars.org)

The August Rebellion—the name of a historic 1974 uprising of women prisoners—should resound throughout the world, but it is tragically unknown, even among most of the Left. Protesting the brutal beating of a fellow prisoner, the inmates at New York’s maximum-security Bedford Hills prison fought off guards, holding seven of them hostage and taking over sections of the facility. This is just one example of many little-known stories of struggle inside women’s prisons and outside their walls.

*Resistance Behind Bars* provides much-needed documentation of collective organizing and the daily struggles inside women’s prisons.



**2021 Book by Victoria Law:**

An accessible guide for activists, educators, and all who are interested in understanding how the prison system oppresses communities and harms individuals.

The US incarcerates more of its residents than any other nation. Though home to 5% of the global population, the US has nearly 25% of the world’s prisoners—a total of over 2 million people. This number continues to steadily rise. Over the past 40 years, the number of people behind bars in the US has increased by 500%.

Journalist Victoria Law explains how racism and social control were the catalysts for mass incarceration and have continued to be its driving force: from the post-Civil War laws that states passed to imprison former slaves, to the laws passed under the “War Against Drugs” campaign that disproportionately imprison Black people. She breaks down these complicated issues into four main parts:

1. The rise and cause of mass incarceration
2. Myths about prison
3. Misconceptions about incarcerated people
4. How to end mass incarceration

Through research and interviews with incarcerated people, Law identifies the 21 key myths that propel and maintain mass incarceration, people into drug treatment.

“Prisons Make Us Safer” is a necessary guide for all who are interested in learning about the cause and rise of mass incarceration and how we can dismantle it.

# From The Archives: "I'm Waiting for Mumia to Be Well Done on the Rotisserie" —The SF Bay View National Black Newspaper exposes the FOP-led lynch mob that wants Mumia Abu-Jamal dead

**Note from the Jamal Journal:** *This May 9, 2007 article by Hans Bennett of Journalists for Mumia was first published by the SF Bay View Newspaper with the title: "Tyrants Hate Free Speech: Police intimidate Mumia supporters as May 17 court date looms."*

"I received nothing less than 10 or 15 death threats over the last four weeks from so-called Philadelphia police officers. I assured them that I would show up today, so they would have an opportunity to kill me. They've intimidated and scared folks. They've done what the Ku Klux Klan has always done in America: terrified Black people, poor people, immigrants and good white people" into stepping down and not confronting racism, declared Sgt. DeLacy Davis, of Black Cops Against Police Brutality.

Davis was speaking at an April 24 event in Philadelphia organized by supporters of Black death-row journalist Mumia Abu-Jamal. Widely considered to be a political prisoner, Abu-Jamal was convicted of killing white Philadelphia police officer Daniel Faulkner in a 1982 trial that Amnesty International has declared a "violation of minimum international standards that govern fair trial procedures and the use of the death penalty,"

Hundreds had gathered in Philadelphia on April 24 to celebrate Abu-Jamal's birthday and to publicize his upcoming oral argument before the federal 3rd Circuit Court of Appeals in Philadelphia on May 17.

The event was met by a counter-demonstration of over a hundred plainclothes police officers - a culmination of recent intimidation tactics by the Fraternal Order of Police, who have long been key opponents of a new trial for Abu-Jamal.

Condemning both the police counter-demonstration and the death threats he had reported, Sgt. Davis passionately declared that "the behavior and tactics" he had observed from police outside was "exactly" what he had witnessed

from the Ku Klux Klan. "It is that intimidation factor that we have to address and deal with."

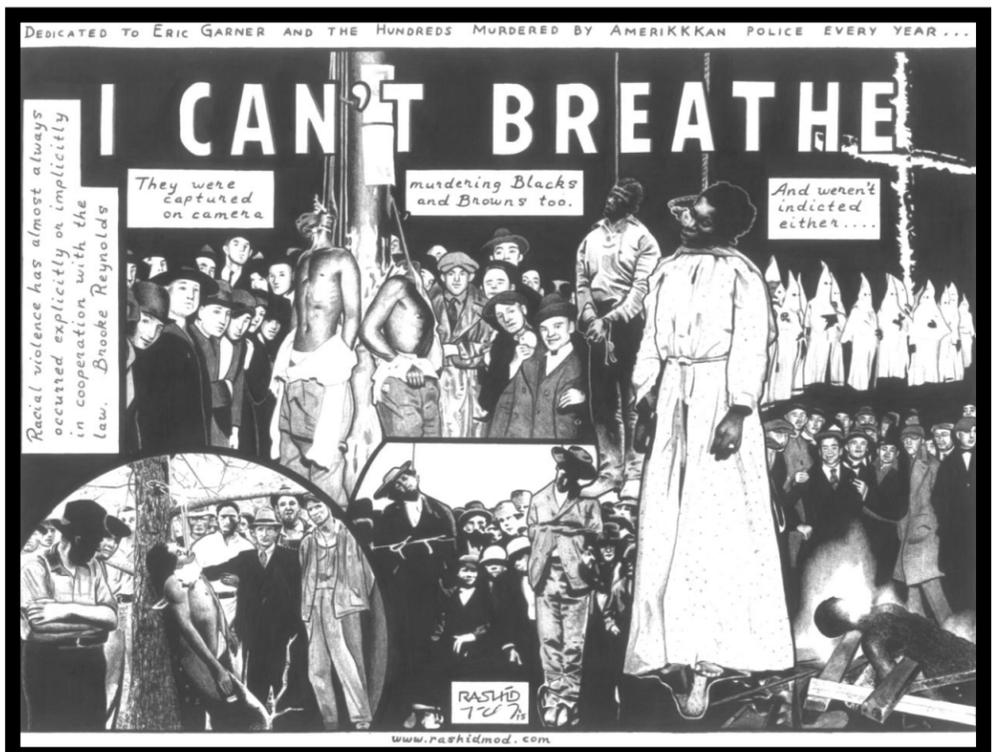
Other guest speakers on April 24 criticized the recent FOP intimidation. Emphasizing the long history of resistance to U.S. racism, Philadelphia journalist Linn Washington told the crowd that "this struggle today around Mumia is not new."

Washington then cited the 19th century Black journalist and abolitionist, Frederick Douglass, who observed, "Tyrants hate free speech." Pointing to the large police counter-protest outside the building, he asked, "If the evidence against Mumia is as overwhelming as it is claimed to be, why is there such a shrill reaction" to someone questioning the evidence?

In his column written the previous week in the Black Philadelphia Tribune newspaper, Washington documented how the April 24 event had to change locations after police intimidation of the previous Clef Club venue. He wrote that the "anti-Abu-Jamal barrage of emails and telephone calls unleashed on the Clef Club included declarations perilously close to terroristic threats."

Earlier that month, an April 15 hip hop concert and fundraiser for Mumia organized by youth in New York City was also forced to relocate when police intimidated the owner of the Remote Lounge. The Amsterdam News, the venerable Black Harlem-based paper, reported that "after receiving 16 citations, thousands of dollars in fines and allegedly malicious threats, the night club owner canceled the concert, two days before the scheduled event."

Acting as the NYC Free Mumia Coalition's legal representative, attorney Michael Tarif Warren later declared at a press conference outside City Hall that "the police engaged in a conspiracy to close this event to prevent a wor-



First published by the SF Bay View Newspaper: "I Can't Breathe" anti-lynching artwork dedicated to Eric Garner and the hundreds murdered by AmeriKKKan police every year. Artwork by Kevin "Rashid" Johnson 264847; Wabash Valley Correctional Facility; P.O. Box 500, Carlisle IN 47838

thy cause." Quoted by Amsterdam News, Warren called for "a fair hearing to air the legal improprieties" of the NYPD.

Comments posted by police officers on the infamous NYPD "RANT" blog website detailed the intimidation campaign. One post stated, "This f--ker should be dead, we should ruin this event and make life miserable for every f-ing Hollywood liberal scum liker that shows up, fry Mumia."

Other posts threatened to send the violent Hells Angels motorcycle gang into the Remote Lounge, set up road blocks, send in undercover police, lure people with prostitutes, write up tickets, throw citations on the club and more.

After the event was forced to relocate, an April 15 thread on the "RANT" site was titled "NY Mumia Hip Hop Benefit Rally Gets Bitch Slapped." One post under the name "Philadelphia Police Highway Patrol" said: "A sincere thank you to all of my NYPD brothers and sisters. You men

and women are truly the best!"

Several other posts continued to boast of their actions with comments like "good job guys, f--k you mumia you dirty savage," "I'm shocked, amazed, and feel a warm glow! Great work. Outstanding!!!," "16 citations - and guess what the hits are gonna keep coming you f--k wad," "Does anyone sell Mumia targets, so I can keep his cause alive in spirit?"

Another wrote: "Everything I know about islam I learned on 9/11."

One post used imagery that explicitly drew the connection to the brutal history of U.S. lynchings, where Black victims of racist white mobs were literally burned alive, stating that "I'm waiting for Mumia to be well done on the rotisserie."

Yet another post used the racist "Sambo" dialect attributed to African Americans for so many years in mainstream culture: "OH SNAP!!! da venue be changed? i hopez publik transpotation be making itz way ova dere fo me!"

## “Battering Mumia as they did that morning qualifies as an attempted lynching.”

**Jamal Journal:** *In their recent SF Bay View articles, both Pam Africa and Dr. Ricardo Alvarez criticize page 5 of DA Krasner's Feb. 3, 2021 brief filed in opposition to Mumia's appeals. In the Feb. 3 brief, Krasner endorses the official police version of Mumia's arrest by writing that Mumia "resisted arrest" and "refused to walk" into the hospital.*

*What is your response to Krasner's Feb. 3 brief?*

**Mark Lewis Taylor:** Well, I think that both Pam Africa and Ricardo Alvarez make their cases quite well for disproving these points as they occur in Krasner's brief. Also, Pam's and Ricardo's claims have been underscored numerous times by several of Mumia's attorneys.

What is further concerning about Krasner's arguing these points is that, to my knowledge, while his brief introduces no new characters or events into

prosecutors' view of the crime, it does rephrase the story in slight but significant ways. In the brief, the DA's Office is not recreating a new story, but the arrest scenario is tweaked so as to emphasize many of the excuses that we now receive from police who handle protestors or who rationalize their killing of Black, Brown and Indigenous peoples in the U.S. Doesn't this language sound familiar – "resisting arrest," "would not walk" or was "reaching for a gun"? This language is consistent with current state power's attempts to rationalize and describe police beatings and killings of protestors and others.

The police have still not provided an account for the evident physical battery that Mumia suffered at the hands of the police upon his arrest. Mumia was so badly beaten, said his sister, Lydia, that she hardly recognized him. Mumia has recounted how, after being shot, he was also beaten and rammed into a

street light pole. In all likelihood, he was beaten more in the back of a paddy wagon headed for the hospital before being dumped on the floor of its ER. Instead of considering any of this as possible, Krasner's brief foregrounds notions about Mumia "reaching for a gun" that an Officer Shoemaker reports seeing "eight inches away from Mumia's hand?"

Krasner knows cops have been found lying and has himself spoken out about police disinformation and perjured testimony. So, why not consider them to be lying about this story? The brief says Mumia was "resisting arrest" and then is reported to have "refused to walk"? This language is especially passable and plausible for that part of the public – still all too many – who today buy into cops' arguments de-

Continued on page 9...

# Students Bashed In Battle Over Abu-Jamal's Healthcare

—Cyber bullies assail students and teacher

By Linn Washington Jr.

(thiscantbehappening.net)

April 16, 2021

A poignant plea from a group of pupils at a Philadelphia charter school sent recently to Philadelphia's top prosecutor — that sought release of an inmate widely considered as falsely incarcerated — prompted a barrage of vile threats against those students and one of their teachers from opponents of that inmate.

Ironically, that menacing triggered by publication of that plea in a Philadelphia newspaper, paralleled actions and inactions by Pennsylvania state prison authorities involving that inmate. Prison authorities seemingly proved positions contained in the letter those middle school students sent to Philadelphia District Attorney Larry Krasner.

That plea from those pupils concerned Mumia Abu-Jamal, the inmate widely considered a political prisoner.

## Emergency Heart Surgery

Recently Pennsylvania prison authorities rushed Abu-Jamal to a hospital for heart surgery related to clogged arteries according to his supporters during a virtual press conference held to present his plight.

Abu-Jamal, convicted in 1982 for the murder of a Philadelphia policeman during a controversial trial, contracted COVID-19 earlier this year. That COVID compounded other medical maladies of Abu-Jamal that relate to negligent health care while incarcerated, his supporters declare.

The student's letter to DA Krasner stated in part, "Mumia is vulnerable because he is a 66-year-old elder. Mumia's doctor said that the only cure for Mumia's medical problems is his freedom. We feel strongly that Mumia should be let out of prison because the prison is the reason he has COVID-19. It's astronomically important that he get the healthcare that he needs and deserves."

## A History of Medical Neglect

Abu-Jamal's chosen doctor and the lawyer handling his medical matters both criticized negligent health care by prison personnel in their respective presentations during that press conference. Their statements echoed the concerns contained in the student's letter. The doctor and the lawyer both said prison authorities have refused to provide them with information about Abu-Jamal's condition.

"It is medically documented that Mumia suffered harm in prison due to neglect," Dr. Richardo Alvarez said during the press conference that featured famed former political prisoner and noted anti-mass incarceration activist, Dr. Angela Davis.

"To this date, I have been provided with no information on Mumia's condition," Dr. Alvarez said. (Prison authorities would not comment to reporters citing regulations against providing information on inmates.)

Alvarez and Professor Davis each decried Pennsylvania punishment practices that produced life without parole sentences for over 1,300 inmates presently in Pennsylvania's state prison system who are now 60-years-and older. The majority of those elderly LWOP inmates — around 760 — are in the 65-years-&-older category, according to the most recent Pa prison statistics. Abu-Jamal turns 67 on April 24, 2021.

Angela Davis said, "We know imprisonment speeds up the aging process." She noted that Abu-Jamal's deteriorating medical condition "has been exacerbated by prison authorities."

Moderator of that press conference, respected scholar Dr. Marc Lamont Hill, also addressed the medical neglect received by Abu-Jamal and other inmates nationwide.

"Hepatitis, diabetes, COVID and now congestive heart failure. These are not coincidences but are incidental to being in prison," Dr. Hill said referencing Abu-Jamal's medical problems,



PHOTO: At the April 19, 2008 Free Mumia protest, the Keystone State Skinheads, and other neo-Nazi groups jointly organized a counter-protest at the Liberty Bell. Photo by Philly IMC.

some of which required orders from a federal judge to force improved treatment by prison authorities.

Hill co-authored a 2012 book with Abu-Jamal entitled, "The Classroom and the Cell: Conversations on Black Life in America." Abu-Jamal, a Philadelphia journalist at the time of his 1981 arrest for the murder of Officer Daniel Faulkner, has published over a dozen books and thousands of commentaries while imprisoned.

## A Blinding Rage

The rabid reactions from some Faulkner supporters to that letter those young pupils sent to DA Krasner, that also questioned flaws in the evidence presented during Abu-Jamal's trial, evidenced a blinding rage.

Attackers bashed a teacher for supporting "cop killers" and using the students despite the fact those students clearly declared in their letter why they wrote that letter.

The student's letter stated that they take Abu-Jamal's plight "personally because one of our classmates is" a relative of Abu-Jamal.

DA Krasner did not immediately respond to the letter from those students.

## DA Krasner and the FOP

Curiously, Krasner's opposition to a

new appeal hearing for Abu-Jamal puts him in synch with opponents of Abu-Jamal who are now working strenuously to defeat Krasner's reelection to the District Attorney post. Those opponents object to Krasner enacting reforms in the criminal justice system.

Krasner maintains his opposition to a new hearing for Abu-Jamal despite Krasner personally discovering evidence now underlying that request for a new hearing. Krasner found that long stashed evidence — documenting misconduct by prosecutors during Abu-Jamal's trial — in a forgotten storage room inside the DA Office complex.

"We can't let Larry Krasner stand in the way of justice," Abu-Jamal's grandson, Jamal Hart Jr., said during that press conference.

Hart discussed his recent encounter with Krasner at a restaurant in Philadelphia. Hart said he spoke with Krasner and he rejected Krasner's claim that the DA's Office is acting fairly.

"Mumia is an innocent man, factually and legally," Hart said. "Mumia Abu-Jamal is a scholar not a criminal."

—Linn Washington Jr. is a professor of journalism at Temple University and an investigative journalist who has covered the case of Mumia Abu-Jamal since 1981.

**"Lynching participants also included such officials as police, lawyers, even judges..."**

## ...Continued from page 8: Interview with Mumia's Spiritual Advisor

signed to rationalize racialized police violence.

**JJ:** Returning to the topic of lynching, what do you think of Pam Africa's assertion that police attempted to lynch Mumia on the morning of Dec. 9, 1981?

**MLT:** Well look, we know that the young journalist Abu-Jamal had received threats from the police long before they found him at the curb of Locust and 13th on that early morning of 1981. Terry Bisson's biographical reflection on Mumia, entitled "On a Move: The Story of Mumia Abu-Jamal," cites more than one occasion when Philadelphia

police would drive slowly by Mumia making hand gestures of a pointed gun and moving trigger finger, as if they had him targeted for killing.

The 1981 police attack on Mumia occurred well after Mumia had served not only in the Panthers, but also after he had written to expose police practices against MOVE and other residents and after he had directly challenged the Rizzo pro-police regime. So, after all this, finding Mumia vulnerable and shot on a curb on Dec. 9 was an opportunity for attack the police could not pass up.

And yes, battering Mumia as they did that morning qualifies as an attempted lynching. If we recall the history of lynching, we know that those actions were not carried out only by mobs of general citi-

zens. Lynching participants also included such officials as police, lawyers, even judges and local pastors, clad in Klan costumery or other disguise. And some felt emboldened to turn up and take pictures for posterity with no disguise at all!

Sure, maybe the early morning beating did not have the same status of spectacle that the "burning and hanging lynchings" had, but surely, if you add on Mumia's later very public trial and death sentence, the function of Mumia's overall brutal treatment is indeed that of a lynching. Lynching in the USA, like crucifixions in Rome were intended as a kind of public service announcement to the poor and repressed: "Act up like this one hanging before you now, and this too will become your fate!"

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**...Continued from page 1:  
Dr. Alvarez on Elder Abuse**

will always be freedom.

Mumia's health remains fragile. He will need multiple medications for the rest of his life and we are working to ensure a better diet and more access to exercise as would be required for rehabilitation from recent cardiac surgery.

**State Sanctioned Violence**

The greatest medical threat to Mumia's health now is state sanctioned violence. On February 3, 2021, Philadelphia District Attorney Larry Krasner and his colleagues, Grady Gervino, Lawrence Good, Nancy Winkelman, and Carolyn Engel Temen, filed a brief that fully embraced the conclusions of the racist Judge Albert Sabo. They openly declare on page five in the "Statement of Facts:"

*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. While lying there, defendant boasted, "I shot the mother fucker and I hope the mother fucker dies." A few moments later, as the officers were about to carry him into the emergency room, defendant repeated, "Yeah, I shot the mother fucker and I hope the mother fucker dies." Shortly thereafter, Officer Faulkner was pronounced dead (N.T.*

**...Continued from page 9:  
Interview with Mumia's Spiritual Advisor**

**Jamal Journal:** *How has it been working as Mumia's spiritual advisor in recent months, since the COVID and congestive heart failure diagnosis in late February and then heart surgery in April?*

**Mark Lewis Taylor:** I visited by video once with him, between the time of his COVID diagnosis, and then his going into the hospital for surgery. It is especially enraging to experience Mumia's "being disappeared," as he was when taken in for heart surgery. To deny his family and friends – as well as outside medical advisor – knowledge of his whereabouts exacerbates the medical trauma for everyone. This is part of the state's violence against the incarcerated and their families, which the state seeks to justify with its concerns for "security."

I put a minister's collar on and searched out some nearby hospitals and eventually confirmed where he was hospitalized. But of course, neither I nor Dr. Ricardo Alvarez, with whom I was in touch about this, were given any kind of access (even by phone). Ricardo and I sent a communication into the hospital, urging its supervising officials to keep the shackles off Mumia and to open all necessary communication between Mumia and his family and key supporters.

We received nothing but denials from hospital security that Mumia was even there. After much phoning of the prison, the governor's office and the hospital, I did receive a brief call from the PA DOC's (Pennsylvania Department of Corrections) special

6/19/82, 176-200, 263-64; 6/21/82, 4.109; 6/24/82, 27-30, 33-34, 56-61, 112-16, 133-36).

This Statement of Fact is the legal reckoning of Mumia's guilt or innocence. It is the foundation on which the courts proceed with future legal decisions. The presumption that Mumia violently resisted arrest and then confessed is wrong, can be easily proven wrong, and is a form of harm that denies Mumia's humanity. Medical evidence clearly demonstrates that Mumia was first shot in the chest and was then beaten by arriving police instead of being immediately transported to the nearby hospital emergency room. The police initiated what defense witness Dessie Hightower called "an attack." In his book, "The Framing of Mumia Abu-Jamal," 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."

This police attack and deliberate withholding of emergency hospitalization was just the beginning of the state sanctioned racial violence that Mumia would continue to experience for the next 39 years. For Larry Krasner and colleagues to describe Mumia as "violently" resisting arrest or "refusing" to walk perpetuates racist trauma.

**Medical Evidence Contradicts the "Hospital Confession"**

counsel saying that his lawyers would make sure that Mumia could call his wife 15 minutes a day. That did happen, as I understand it, because two of Mumia's lawyers, Bret Grote and Bob Boyle, kept pressure on DOC officials.

I don't view the role of a "spiritual advisor" in prison to be primarily that of a sharer of words from sacred texts or the imparting of religious wisdom per se. Maybe there's a place for that at times when it is requested by prisoners. But recall, the notion of "spirit" in most languages refers to breath, to breathing that makes for life. To work spirit, to facilitate spirit, then, is to open up passages that allow life to occur and grow. In that sense, fostering connections and opening passageways between Mumia and his family, his friends and his necessary advocates – all this is spirit work even as it is also very material, often also a kind of political practice.

The established religions of colonizers and imperialists have regularly instilled in people the idea that spirit is somehow antithetical to body. In fact, the spirit is the life of the body, the life animating our struggle to liberate all realms of material creation that suffer from oppression and injustice.

**JJ:** *How does Mumia and your work with him relate to your scholarly interest in "liberating spirit?"*

**MLT:** Well, as your question indicates, you know I've explained this notion of "liberating spirit" elsewhere, as at my website. Liberating spirit creates freeing ways of being amid global and local structures and during the daily practices that grind us down, that

In his Feb. 3 brief, District Attorney Larry Krasner's also chose to officially endorse another highly problematic aspect of the Mumia Abu-Jamal case: the perjured trial testimony given to support the alleged "hospital confession." Prosecution witnesses Officer Gary Bell and hospital security guard Priscilla Durham both testified that Mumia loudly confessed to shooting Officer Faulkner while at the hospital.

As documented by the Jamal Journal the "hospital confession" testimony is an undeniable case of perjury that should be a national embarrassment for the 1981 FOP Police. Accounts of the "hospital confession" first surfaced during an internal investigation into Mumia's police brutality case two months after Mumia's arrest. Gary Wakshul was one of the officers who then claimed that Mumia confessed.

However, in Wakshul's official report from the morning of Dec. 9, 1981 he stated that the "negro male made no comment." Wakshul was not called as a witness by Assistant District Attorney Joseph McGill and on the last day of trial, when Mumia's lawyer attempted to bring Wakshul in for testimony, Judge Albert Sabo denied the request and told Mumia: "You and your attorney goofed."

At Mumia's 1982 trial, there was powerful testimony from two medical professionals that directly contradicted the perjured "hospital confession" testimony from Gary Bell and Priscilla Durham. Dr. Anthony Coletta, a respected surgeon and medical leader, testified that Mumia suffered injuries consistent with the reported police brutality, that he was with Mumia the whole time, that Mumia never shouted a confession and that Mumia could barely even speak.

Dr. Regina Culdemo also did not testify to hearing the "hospital confession." But Dr. Culdemo did testify that she witnessed a police officer kick Mumia when he was laying on the floor of the hospital entrance.

**Silencing the Medical Community**

Medical professionals are part of a web of professionals who are all in service of our communities. We are "mandatory reporters" when we observe child abuse, intimate partner violence and elder abuse.

As Mumia's medical consultant I have compelling evidence of an abuse of an elder that is deeply loved and respected by his family and community and across the world. It is our ethical responsibility to intervene when we see abuse by police, courts, and the district attorney's office.

The correct Statement of Facts must read that Mumia was viciously beaten by police officers and that the confession was perjured by police officers.

Indeed every "Statement of Fact" now needs full review in relation to harm done to Mumia, whose well founded fear of state violence would call for the safety of community forums so that those in power are more accountable to the harm that is done when their "Statement of Facts" harm our elders.

It is time to free Mumia, free all political prisoners, free all our elders in prison!

*—Dr. Ricardo Alvarez is a physician who worked 25 years in a community health center in the Mission district of San Francisco. He brings his medical sociology training to combine with his medical training to identify the social determinants of health to include an understanding of State Violence as the single greatest threat to Mumia Abu-Jamal's health.*

destroy humanity and earth – that oppress. Liberating spirit names a way being "political" in the broadest sense of engaging the powers that subjugate us. It is material life struggling and fighting, acting up creatively through the many arts and mobilizing new community with a steady relentless, resilience in our social movements to revolutionize our lives against a state that represses.

I guess that in the U.S. my participation in the work for Mumia has been a way to observe and feel "liberating spirit" to be at work in a profoundly full sense. Consider how many political issues and fronts are encountered through the movement for Mumia. The U.S. white supremacy that rationalized and then grew stronger in the wake of the slavery that built the U.S. capitalist system – well, Mumia writes in a way that remembers and foregrounds all that. He has been a vocal critic of the surveillance and police state that enforces the alienation of labor and protects the rule of capital.

He has been a spokesperson for the earth – "mother earth" as he writes with MOVE – the earth that nurtures us all. He has written my class with special commentary on the frequent erasure of women's leadership from Christian and other religious organizations of colonizers and empire builders. He dreams, writes and works for futures free from empires and capitalists and for "the return of nature" and of a genuine "socialism and ecology." (These latter phrases are from the work of a writer whom both Mumia and I appreciate, John Bellamy Foster.)

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# Movement History: A Huge People's Victory

By Dr. Suzanne Ross

The story of our movement's victory in its struggle to save Mumia's life in 2015, when he nearly died from Hepatitis C, is truly inspiring. The Department of Corrections (DOC) first denied the diagnosis and, when proven wrong, denied the treatment. Our movement was awesome in what we brought to that battle. There is no question that the PA DOC and the forces that empower it in its genocidal mass incarceration rely on medical neglect and malpractice as a key tactic in their strategy.

When Mumia became seriously ill, a passionately determined movement went into high gear. Perhaps its most dramatic show of power was at an evidentiary hearing held over three days in late December 2015 in the US Federal District Court in Scranton. Mumia's attorneys sued for him to get appropriate medical treatment. In the courtroom the attorneys, were combative, knowledgeable, and quick. In the months that followed, they never missed a beat, never gave up when the DOC did everything it could to stop them. And even after they won and Mumia was given the appropriate medicine, the lawyers sued for damages based on the harm caused by the delay in treatment. What an example of lawyering for the people.

The doctor, Joseph Harris, an expert on Hepatitis C who had worked with underserved populations both in NYC and in Colombia, was similarly impressive. Despite not being permitted



PHOTO: Suzanne Ross visits Mumia on November 27, 2015.

## ...Continued from page 10: Interview with Mumia's Spiritual Advisor

This fullness of liberating struggle, across so many issues and up against so many fronts of resistance, has been evident from the time of Mumia's earliest columns to his most recent writings. See for example the collection edited by Johanna Fernández in "Writing on the Wall." Note the breadth of concerns covered in the three-volume work Mumia authored with Stephen Vittoria, "Murder Incorporated." Again, one person cannot take up all that "liberating spirit" demands of thought and practice, but to work through the movement for Mumia Abu-Jamal is to find oneself at work, directly or indirectly on so many of the important challenges of our time. This is one of the reasons that even though I cannot be involved in as many actions

to examine Mumia, he was able to diagnose Mumia's condition as Hepatitis C, explaining the skin disease which was causing Mumia such pain and sleeplessness, as related to that condition, and educating all those in the courtroom about the major new medical breakthrough that had produced a medicine with a 90 to 95% cure rate. He recommended this medicine for Mumia.

Dr. Harris was surely the "star witness", obviously impressing the judge with the medical picture he was presenting. He embodied a sharp contrast to the doctors the DOC put forward: a dermatologist who admitted to knowing nothing about Hepatitis C and whose main professional work outside of the prison was as a consultant to spas in Europe; another doctor, the DOC expert on Hepatitis C, president of a private company that provided medical services to prisons in both Pennsylvania and New York, who had numerous complaints in his record. During NYC hearings into this company and its service to Rikers' inmates, which ultimately led to the termination of that contract, the doctor was accused of being callous toward the prison deaths attributable to his company's neglect and malpractice, and evasive in his responses to questioning by city council members.

Finally, the most shocking medical testimony was by the DOC's Chief of Clinical Services. When one of the attorneys asked him to identify his sworn declaration filed in opposition to Mumia's Motion, the doctor immediately insisted that the signature was his but that the statement was not. To add to the tawdry picture of the whole DOC health operation, it turned out that Laura Neal, the DOC counsel, had apparently changed Dr. Noel's statement: that is, she committed perjury in the court process!

of the movement for Mumia, I continually introduce my students to Mumia and the movement.

Let me give just one example of the way those struggling for and with Mumia have impacted others. In my video visit that occurred between Mumia's COVID diagnosis and his heart surgery, he mentioned to me how deeply moved he was by words from his relatively new prison doctor, Dr. Baddick. That doctor had read Federal District Judge Robert Mariani's decision in favor of Mumia in 2017, allowing him to be treated with antiviral meds for his Hepatitis C infection. Mumia with the help of the movement and legal work was not only saved, but something more happened. As Dr. Baddick said to Mumia: "You saved thousands of other lives." (Indeed, Missouri is just one other state where I understand that Mumia's case for



PHOTO: Following Mumia's emergency hospitalization on March 30, 2015, caravans of over 40 activists travelled from Philly and NYC on April 3 to SCI Mahanoy prison in Frackville, PA, then drove 80 miles to the headquarters of the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections in Mechanicsburg, where this photo was taken. Photo by Jamal Journal staff photographer Joe Piette.

Dovetailing with the legal effort, our movement continued its non-stop phone calls and e-mails to the governor, the DOC, and the prison demanding proper care for Mumia and his release so that he could get the kind of care he needed. Demonstrations took place at the governor's office in Philadelphia and in Harrisburg and at the DOC, press conferences were held both in Philadelphia and New York, and at the DOC. We hand delivered thousands of petitions. We even showed up in a caravan at Mahanoy, where we stopped every visitor in a car on a busy Sunday, to alert families and friends of the danger to their loved ones who could be infected with Hepatitis C and would not be told so by the prison doctors. We also showed up at both hospitals where Mumia was hospitalized, and even held a press conference at one of the hospitals with Mumia's wife, brother, and supporters. Finally, we waged an international campaign of calls and letter writing that included people such as Archbishop Desmond Tutu.

Legal filings would intersect with grassroots actions, and the letters and calls to the governor and DOC never stopped. We were in the media and blanketed the internet.

Like in 1995 and 1999 when we

made it clear that the government could not kill Mumia by legal execution, we now demonstrated that they could also not get away with a medical execution.

This struggle was indeed historic. On January 3, 2017 Federal Judge Mariani ordered that Mumia be treated with the recommended anti-viral cure. Never before had a US court been able to enforce the prescription of a medicine on the DOC. After much foot dragging and cruel delays, Mumia was finally treated with Harvoni, and in May 2017 announced that he was free of Hep C! On April 12, 2021 the Philadelphia Inquirer headlined: "5000 inmates with Hepatitis C have sued the PA prisons and now are on their way to get treatment". What an incredible people's victory for Mumia and all PA prisoners suffering from Hepatitis C, and a strong example for fighting such a powerful adversary as the State of PA and winning. In the end, Mumia's victory also affected thousands of others under PA's jurisdiction who were granted the same right to treatment by the Governor.

*--Dr. Suzanne Ross is International Spokesperson for ICFMAJ and the former longtime co-chair of the Free Mumia Coalition in NYC.*

his Hepatitis cure has since become precedent-setting for many other prisoners).

In a revised version of my 2015 work, "The Executed God" (397-450), a book which I dedicated to Mumia, I added a new final chapter on Mumia, explaining his importance. I borrowed literary Marxist critic Walter Benjamin's notion of the "great criminal" to explain that the terrorizing and repressive state often makes certain figures into "great criminal" figures. They do this to demonize them to the fullest, because the state sees them as especially threatening, able to expose the founding violence of the state and also to stoke popular revolt and revolution against the state.

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# Professor Johanna Fernández Reports From the Frontlines of Mumia's Hospitalization for Congestive Heart Failure and COVID-19

This March 28, 2021 article by Baruch College History Professor Johanna Fernández was first published by the Verso Books blog as: "The Only Treatment is Freedom: Mumia Abu-Jamal and COVID." ([www.versobooks.com](http://www.versobooks.com))

*"History is not merely something to be read. And it does not refer merely, or even principally, to the past. On the contrary, the great force of history comes from the fact that we carry it within us, are unconsciously controlled by it in many ways, and history is literally in the present in all that we do."*

—James Baldwin

On Friday, February 26, 2021 Mumia Abu-Jamal called Pam Africa, the person largely responsible for keeping alive the movement to save and free him for 40 years. Mumia told her that he was certain he had COVID-19; that he was having difficulty breathing as well as chest pressure and pain.

Within two hours of that call, the movement to free Mumia mobilized hundreds of supporters to call the prison and the Philadelphia District Attorney's office to demand immediate medical care for Mumia and his immediate release.

Tried and true, the call-to-action worked. The next day guards entered the imprisoned radio journalist's cell and without notice, escorted him to the prison infirmary. On Monday, Mumia's attorneys inquired about their cli-

ent's health with the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections attorney who reported that Mumia had been tested for COVID over the weekend and the results were negative. None of us had heard from Mumia directly, however.

Amid tension, worry and stress (Pam Africa's blood pressure shot up near the 200s), the movement issued a press release and prepared for a press conference in front of the DA's office that Wednesday, March 3. We emphasized that Mumia reported serious COVID symptoms including chest pain—despite the negative test results reported by the prison. Near the end of the press conference, which was being streamed -live on YouTube, Mumia's attorney Bob Boyle phoned saying that the PA DOC attorney reported that a fourth test came back positive. Mumia had COVID 19.

But the PA DOC attorney failed to paint a full picture of the situation to Mumia's attorneys. A clear sense of what happened emerged minutes after the conclusion of the dramatic press conference. Mumia happened to call from the prison infirmary as we were breaking down our impromptu stage; and there—in front of the Philadelphia



Campaign to Bring Mumia Home founder Johanna Fernández speaks at the March 3 press conference outside DA Krasner's office shortly before learning that Mumia had tested positive for COVID-19. Photo by Jamal Journal staff photographer Joe Piette.

DA's office—he shared what actually happened: the day after he spoke with Pam Africa, guards came to Mumia's cell and escorted him first to the infirmary and then to the hospital where doctors determined that he had water in his lungs and throughout his body. During four-days of hospitalization, the doctors informed him that he had COVID and Congestive Heart Failure and that ten pounds of fluid had been drawn from his lungs and body. As he was painting a picture of what he underwent, I thought of connecting him to his chosen doctor, who asked if he felt that he had been treated compassionately in the hospital. Mumia responded with a rote yes, said that he felt better, but emphasized that the most sobering challenge before him was to have to once again attempt to get a handle on the other crisis, the Job-like skin condition of biblical proportion that disfigured his entire body with open sores everywhere five years ago and that was back.

## The Hospital Shackling

On another call, days later, Mumia's breath was labored. When the imprisoned Black Panther called, I asked if he thought he was having a COVID relapse. He said, "nah, I think it's my skin, it feels like my entire body is on fire." When I suggested that he might need to be hospitalized to address this intractable, severe and debilitating chronic skin condition, the tension in Mumia's famously calm voice jumped a few notches. He said that he couldn't go back to the hospital. Mumia's reaction resembled that of Complex-PTSD. I moved slowly in the conversation to try to understand what was going on. I suggested that he might have to be re-hospitalized for his skin condition. It was then that Mumia recoiled, saying that he couldn't go back to the hospital. Recognizing from the sound of his voice that I was entering sensitive territory, I probed. Mumia had spoken to his wife, to Pam and to me numerous times in two weeks, but it took a trigger to reveal a situation that was hard

to hear.

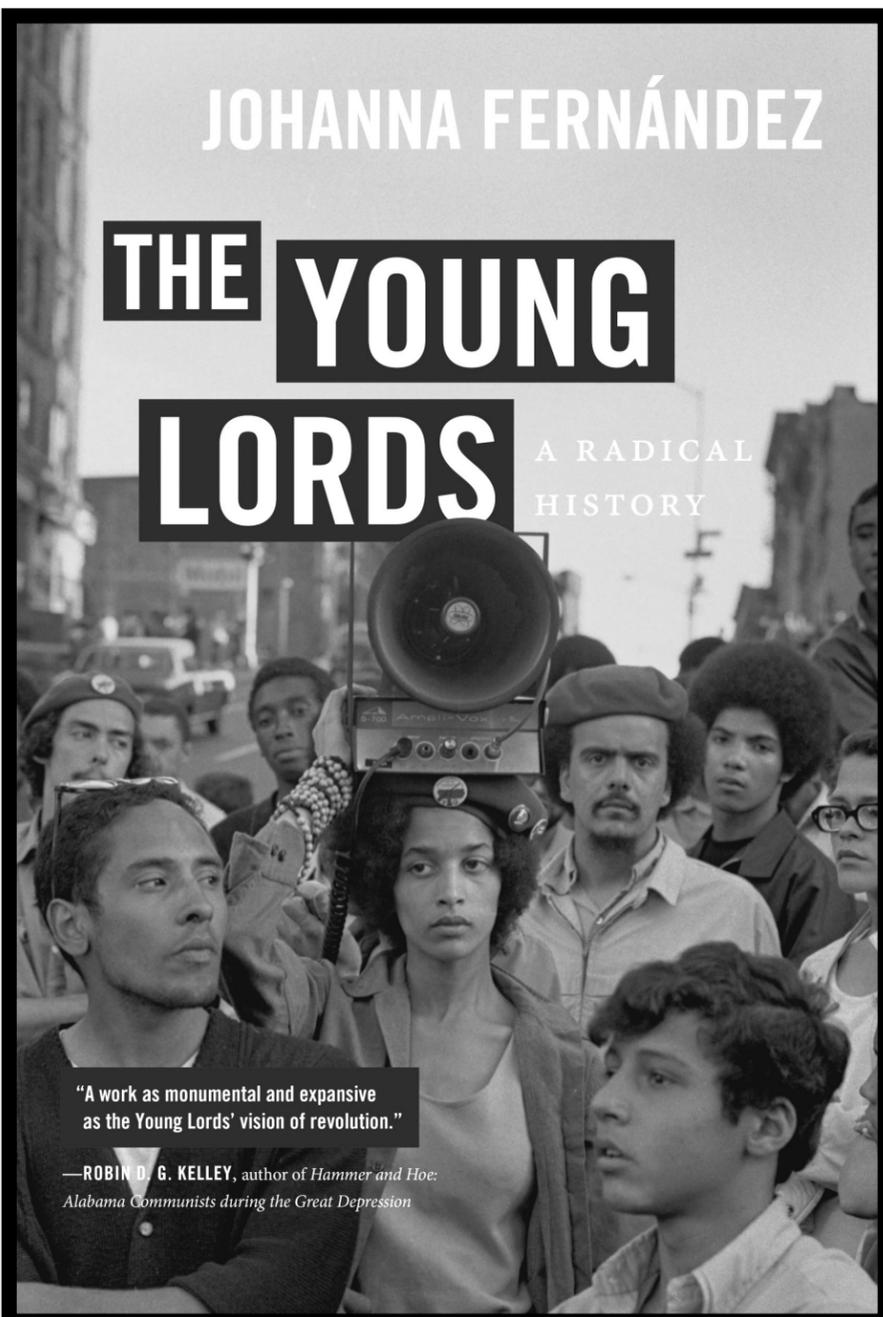
In the approximately five minutes remaining of this timed, monitored and frequently interrupted prison call, I learned that per Department of Correction protocol, this sixty-six-year-old man diagnosed with COVID and Congestive Heart Failure, undergoing di-areses and with an infernal skin condition, was shackled to the bed for four days during his recent hospitalization. He explained that while he had wounds all over his body, the bloody wound of his lower leg—captured in the photo taken by the nurse at the prison infirmary upon his discharge—he got from the shackles that dug into his already raw skin during the entirety of his four day stay in the hospital. He added that the nurse missed the ones on his other leg and the ones on his lower arms.

The movement decided to release photographs taken of Mumia upon his arrival at the prison infirmary from the hospital. The photo of the bloody wound on Mumia's lower leg caused by the shackling and another showing Mumia with bloodshot eyes, noticeably gaunt—he had lost 30LBS—looking at the camera with gut-wrenching vulnerability.

## The Echoes of Slavery

The practice of shackling incarcerated people is commonplace across the United States. In fact, it is ordained by politicians and corrections "professionals" of all stripes who've been riding the coattails of Black Lives Matters denouncing White Supremacy in the public square but enforcing it in the daily practices of their institutions. Recall that Jacob Blake was shackled to a hospital bed after police in Kenosha had shot and paralyzed him from the waist down. Police unshackled him only after protesters exposed the gross injustice. In each of these cases, authorities cynically justify their inhumanity with a supposed concern for safety. But, if safety is the measure of their actions, why do they insist on

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**The COVID Health Crisis**

holding old men and women who pose no threat to society in their COVID infected prisons? Safety is camouflage and pretext for the practice of authoritarian control that daily erodes standards of freedom for everybody in society.

Loud and clear are the echoes of slavery, which —as Eric Williams shows in *Capitalism and Slavery*— for the first time in human history produced the global distribution and mass use of handcuffs, shackles and fetters because after all, enslaved Africans had to be brought to heel.

### Free Maroon Shoatz!

The inhumanity of the COVID crisis —and its spread in the prisons, which are now death traps — is eye-opening for those in close proximity to it. And Mumia is not alone in his suffering.

When 77-year-old Russell Maroon Shoatz, a Pennsylvania political prisoner with stage-four colon cancer, was diagnosed with COVID, medical staff sent him to a small, cold, dank prison gymnasium where others with COVID were being quarantined under inhumane conditions.

When Maroon arrived, he was greeted by 29 other senior prisoners who said to him: "Welcome, we've been waiting for you, we figured it wasn't long before you got it too." In these already cramped quarters, 30 elderly men with COVID had access to one bathroom stall.

In a phone call with his daughter, Theresa Shoatz, Maroon reported that because his corner of the gym had no light, he had to go to the bathroom on himself because under his condition he couldn't risk getting up and falling. As

Dr. Ricardo Alvarez stated, for Mumia, Maroon and many others, "the only treatment is freedom."

### Mass Incarceration Crisis

The decision of most governors to hold prisoners captive under these conditions, and their refusal to decarcerate even during a pandemic, is a crime against humanity. They underscore America's entrenched commitment to racist barbarity.

In the last 40 years, US incarcerated people have grown old serving life or decades-long terms in an indefensible system committed to excessive and draconian sentencing.

Today's reality has turned US prisons into cruel, old people's homes for poor Black and Brown workers warehoused at the height of urban deindustrialization in the 1980s and 1990s, when American capitalism could not employ large swaths of city dwellers.

But these tortuous conditions aren't the only problem. It's about Americans' right to know how society's most powerless are treated, for in the end that's a barometer of how we are all going to be treated. Arbitrary, whimsical, and sometimes deliberately deadly decisions are made daily by prison officials and corrections officers. Like so much in government bureaucracy, decisions that carry enormous weight in how we act as a society are vested in the hands of a few who are ill-equipped to decide public policy but are all too eager to wield their limited power to inflict cruelty on the prisoners they view as less than human.

That's why at the very least, prison reform organizers and abolitionists are demanding the release of aging people in prison (RAPP) over the age of 50 or with pre-existing conditions, who face



PHOTO: Supporters converged on Pennsylvania Governor Tom Wolf's home in Mt. Wolf, PA on May 2, 2021 to demand the medical release of political prisoner Russell "Maroon" Shoatz. Please take action to support Maroon! Call Gov. Wolf at (717) 787-2500 to demand the release of Maroon and all elderly prisoners. Learn more here: [www.russellmaroonshoats.wordpress.com](http://www.russellmaroonshoats.wordpress.com) Photo by Jamal Journal staff photographer Joe Piette.

premature death if they contract the flu, cancer, hepatitis, pneumonia, COVID-19 or congestive heart disease, as in Abu-Jamal's case. The only humane recourse is to let elderly and vulnerable prisoners go home. Ultimately, we want a society in which social problems are not solved with carceral repression.

The inextricable link between incarceration and standards of democracy in a country led the Russian novelist Fyodor Dostoevsky to observe that, "The degree of civilization in society can be judged by entering its prisons."

Mumia spent 28.5 years in the absolute isolation of death row, without the ability to touch another person. In 2011, a federal court overturned that sentence arguing that it was unconstitutionally imposed on Mumia. In 2018, six boxes of new evidence in his case emerged. One of those boxes con-

tained a letter penned by Robert Chobert, the original prosecutor's star witness in the case of Mumia Abu-Jamal. In that letter, Robert Chobert asks then Assistant DA Joe McGill, where's my money and what do you need me to sign for me to get it. This suggests what we've known all along—that Robert Chobert —like other witnesses— was bribed by the prosecutor to finger then award-winning radio journalist Mumia Abu-Jamal as the shooter of a white police officer in Philadelphia. This year marks 40 years since his arrest. It's time to bring Mumia, and all sixties-era political prisoners home.

—*Johanna Fernández is a Professor of History at Baruch College in NYC ([johannafernandez.net](http://johannafernandez.net)). She founded the Campaign to Bring Mumia Home and is co-director of the 2009 documentary film about Mumia's case, entitled "Justice on Trial."*



PHOTO: Pam Africa's article from Jamal Journal Newspaper Issue #1 confronting Philadelphia District Attorney Larry Krasner's February 3 brief was featured as the lead story at the San Francisco Bay View National Black Newspaper on March 28, 2021. This photo featured on the front page was taken at the March 12, 2021 protest outside DA Krasner's office. Pam Africa, with the Jamal Journal Newspaper in hand, presented new photos of Mumia during the March health emergency, alongside photos of Mumia when he was healthier. Photo by Jamal Journal staff photographer Joe Piette. Visit: [www.sfbayview.com](http://www.sfbayview.com)

# Demand the immediate release of imprisoned activist journalist Mumia Abu-Jamal —Now in His 40th Year as an Incarcerated Prisoner, Abu-Jamal Has Covid-19

Written by Dave Lindorff

([www.thiscantbehappening.net](http://www.thiscantbehappening.net))

February 27, 2021

Internationally known US political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal has reported to friends and family on the outside that he has contracted Covid-19 in the Pennsylvania prison where he is incarcerated, and says he is having difficulty breathing. His life is in immediate danger and he is in urgent need of hospital care.

This latest outrage was sadly predictable. Prisons across the US have for years been allowing serious illness to serve as a form of “silent execution” of prisoners, many of them certainly innocent of the crimes they were convicted of. Many prisoners in the system, guilty or not, are serving unfairly punitive terms that keep them confined into an old age meaning they are particularly vulnerable to potentially fatal illnesses, whether that is flu, cancer, hepatitis, pneumonia or now Covid-19.

Noted journalist and political activist Abu-Jamal, now 66 years old and entering his 40th year in prison, is serving a sentence of life in prison without possibility of parole following his 1982 conviction of murder of a white police officer.

As I have written in my book on his case, *Killing Time*, his conviction followed a trial that featured coached and lying prosecution witnesses (including police officers), prosecutorial misconduct, withheld exculpatory evidence, racial bias in jury selection and a racist pro-prosecution judge overheard saying at the start of the trial that he would “help fry the nigger.” His appeal process was just as badly corrupted. Significantly, it was fatally tainted by the refusal of a former Philadelphia DA, Ron Castille,

who during his tenure oversaw the legal effort to defeat Mumia’s appeals, to recuse himself later when, as a state supreme court justice he ruled on those same appeals he had overseen.

The entire legal process in Abu-Jamal’s case has been a grotesque atrocity and an epic scandal.

Already suffering from cirrhosis of the liver because, like virtually all prisoners in American jails, Mumia was, until a federal court ordered it, denied timely access to medication known to be 95% effective in treating the Hepatitis C virus endemic in US prisons. This was done by prison officials who were well aware that the disease, if left untreated, usually leads predictably to cirrhosis, then to liver cancer and eventually to death. In Mumia’s case, legal challenges by state attorneys for the prison system intentionally delayed that court order until he his disease had already advanced to cirrhosis of his liver.

Now Mumia has predictably caught Covid-19. I say predictably again because US prisons, overcrowded and impossible to maintain safe separation in, are known to be breeding grounds for epidemic disease, and yet have not been declared priority locations for early access to the vaccines that protect against the spread of this deadly virus that has already killed half a million Americans.

This denial of vaccination to a captive population of 2.3 million people is nothing short of a crime against humanity. It is a crime made all the more outrageous because, thanks to the excessive sentences so common in this vindictive, racist, classist and deliberately cruel society, many US prison inmates are old. The Bureau of Prisons reports that 20% of its prisoners, for example, are over 50. State prisons may be even worse, with many of them routinely sentencing felons to as much as 40 years, or, in case of rapes and murders, life without parole. Compare

that to most civilized nations which limit sentences to 10-12 years even for the most serious of crimes.

Given the current pandemic medical crisis facing the US and the world, the

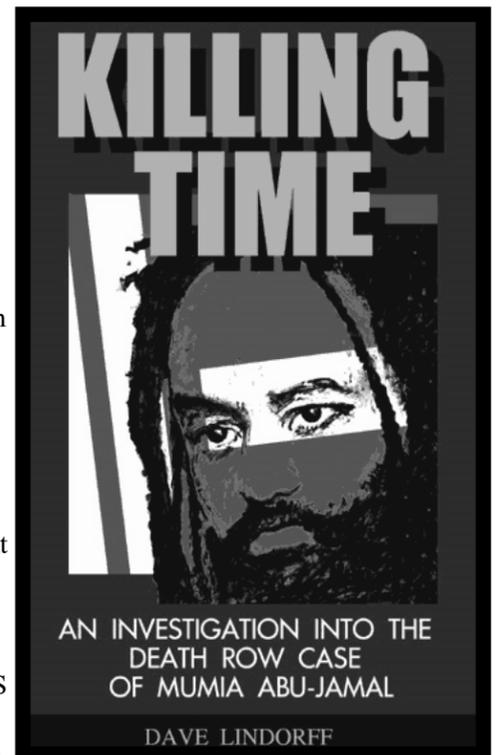
US and all 50 states should immediately order the release of all older prisoners over the age of 50 unless a solid case can be made in individual instances that some older prisoner poses a grave risk of committing a violent act if released.

Mumia Abu-Jamal is not such a prisoner, having been a non-violent model prisoner for his entire 39 years of incarceration.

Free Mumia and all older inmates in Pennsylvania’s prisons immediately!

There is a virtual rally for Mumia’s release set for March 6

—Dave Lindorff is author of *“Killing Time: An Investigation into the Death Row Case of Mumia Abu-Jamal”* (Common Courage Press, 2003).



## A Letter of Thanks

Written by Mumia Abu-Jamal

March 19, 2021

Dear sisters, brothers, comrades, and friends and family,

Ona MOVE! How can I thank you? These, my words, can hardly measure the flood of love that you have radiated on my behalf recently. I am almost — almost — without words, but I’ll try.

Thank you, Wadiya. Thank you, Pam Africa.

Your support from Philadelphia to France, from points across the nation and literally around the globe, pulled me from a prison cell and placed me

in a hospital room to be treated for a condition I didn’t know I had.

In the age of pandemic as of January 2021, over 300,000 prisoners have tested positive for COVID-19. Imagine that in a cell, trying to breathe with a weight pressing on your chest.

Imagine an elder man or woman, or even a young person, because yes, we are also in an age of mass incarceration, which day-by-day increases its infliction upon the elderly struggling, unsuccessfully, to breathe, to walk, to be.

I thank you all for reaching out and I urge you all, let our mission be abolition. I love you all. Thank you again, from the bottom of my heart.

From imprisoned nation, this is Mumia Abu-Jamal.

## International Federation of Journalists Calls for the Release of Mumia Abu-Jamal

March 12, 2021 Statement

Mumia Abu-Jamal, an African-American journalist with close ties to the Black Panthers, who has spent nearly 40 years in prison, has tested positive for Covid. The International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) has backed calls from US (NWU) and French (SNJ, SNJ-CGT) affiliates for his immediate release amid growing fears over his health.

Abu-Jamal, 66, is currently being

held for life without parole at the Mahanoy Penitentiary in Pennsylvania. He suffers from severe respiratory difficulties and has to deal with serious heart failure, as well as debilitating skin problems.

He is being held in solitary confinement in the prison infirmary but has not received any medical treatment, despite his intense suffering.

For his doctor, Ricardo Alvarez, “his release is the only treatment” to pre-

vent the worst.

Abu-Jamal, a former president of the Philadelphia Association of Black Journalists, has spent nearly 40 years in detention. After 30 years on death row, and after having escaped the death penalty twice thanks to international mobilisations, he is now being held for life without parole. He was jailed for the 1981 murder of Philadelphia police officer Daniel Faulkner following a trial widely condemned as unfair and criticized for constitutional

failings.

The IFJ, the SNJ, the SNJ-CGT and the NWU (National Writers Union) have consistently denounced the behaviour of the political and prison authorities as intolerable and inhumane.

THEY CALL ON JOURNALISTS TO SHOW THEIR SOLIDARITY AND SEND MESSAGES TO DEMAND THAT MUMIA ABU JAMAL BE URGENTLY TRANSFERRED TO HOSPITAL:

## Palestinian Mobilization Calls for the Immediate and Unconditional Release of Mumia Abu-Jamal

March, 2021 Statement

We the Palestinian Feminist Collective, Palestine Literature Festival, and the undersigned Palestinian individuals from all sectors of Palestinian society call for the immediate and unconditional release of political prisoner and veteran Black Panther Mumia Abu-Jamal, who has tested positive for COVID in the Pennsylvania prison system.

In addition to COVID, Abu-Jamal was diagnosed with congestive heart disease, adding to his existing medical condition of cirrhosis of the liver following years of medical neglect by prison authorities.

Abu-Jamal has been wrongfully imprisoned for nearly 40 years—following repeatedly demonstrated police, judicial and prosecutorial misconduct—of which he spent 28 years on death row. Rather than risk a new trial which would surely have exonerated Abu-Jamal and exposed the corruption that sent a powerful intellectual to prison simply to silence him, authorities took Abu-Jamal off death row, but he remains without his freedom, away from his family and friends who are greatly needed around him now as his health deteriorates.

According to a statement released by Mobilization4Mumia, Dr. Ricardo Alvarez, an Independent physician with decades of work in prison advocacy, explained that the prison infirmary where Mumia is now being held is no place for those who are ill or elderly. “The only acceptable treatment for

Mumia Abu-Jamal is his freedom.” He added, “We have a simple cost-effective public health intervention in the face of COVID in prisons—release our elderly prisoners. Data shows they do not pose a public safety risk.”

We urge everyone in our community to mobilize for the freedom of freedom-fighter Mumia Abu-Jamal. We urge District Attorney Larry Krasner and Governor Tom Wolf to implement this minimal act of justice, humanity, and decency: Release Mumia Abu-Jamal to live the rest of his days in the peace and freedom he deserves. He has always been innocent of the accusations against him. He poses no harm or threat to anyone. Leaving him to die in prison is an act of unconscionable cruelty.

At least 110 incarcerated people have died of COVID in PA prisons. And “90% of inmates who died of coronavirus in 2020 were over 50 with likely pre-existing health conditions,” stated 32 PA lawmakers in a Feb. 8th letter to Pennsylvania Governor Tom Wolf. (<https://bit.ly/3uH11AH>)

A virtual town hall, entitled “Freedom has never been so close”, on Saturday, Mar. 6, 2-4pm will feature up to the minute updates on Abu-Jamal's medical and legal developments and upcoming actions. Other parts of the program include COVID in prisons, political prisoners, police brutality and mass incarceration and special appearances by Chairman Fred Hampton Jr and Chicago Hip-hop artist Vic Mensa.

## Pacifica National Board Resolution To Mandate Radio Carts About The Case Of Mumia To Protect His Life

Written in March, 2021

Whereas, Mumia Abu-Jamal has spent his life in the fight for justice, against systemic racism and human rights and,

Whereas, Mumia Abu-Jamal is one of the leading journalists in the world and is a member of CWA NABET and,

Whereas, Pacifica in it's history has fought against racism and the violation of human rights in the United States and,

Whereas, many Pacifica stations and Affiliates have programmed Mumia's commentaries on their programs and,

Whereas, Mumia's life is now in danger with covid and other serious illnesses which threaten his life and,

Whereas, Pacifica must stand for justice and human rights which is part of the principles of Pacifica and one of the reasons it was founded,

Therefore, be it resolved that Pacifica develop radio carts informing listeners about the case of Mumia Abu-Jamal, the need for his immediate release and providing Information to listeners on how to save his life and that these carts be mandated on all Pacifica stations.

## Japan Innocence & Death Penalty Information Center

## 日本冤罪・死刑情報センター

March, 2021 Statement

The Japan Innocence and Death Penalty Information Center strongly urges people around the globe to stand in solidarity with Mumia. Mumia has been in contact with us, and I (Michael H. Fox) visited him twice when he was still on death row at Greene.

The world is full of Mumias- those who espoused change and paid the price for

urging reform. And those who ran afoul of the law because their color or ethnic background differed from the majority. There can be no greater human endeavor than working for justice. One of the great rabbis of the 20th century, Menachem Schneerson, often taught, "When we right the wrongs of society, we are acting as partners in the act of sustaining creation."

Let us join together to reform the world. Mumia's release will advance humanity.

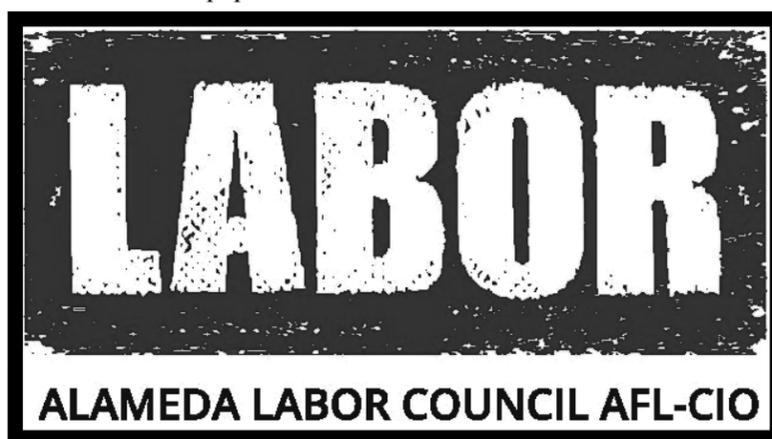
## Alameda Labor Council (AFL-CIO) Call To Action for Mumia's Health Emergency and Statement of Support for Colin Kaepernick

March, 2021 Statement

Alameda Labor Council applauds Colin Kaepernick's statement calling for freedom for Mumia Abu-Jamal. In a video statement, Kaepernick documented how nearly 40 years ago Abu-Jamal was framed for the murder of a Philadelphia police officer, framed by a police department notorious for its systematic racist brutality and for tampering with evidence to convict the innocent.

Kaepernick himself has been blackballed by the NFL for protesting police violence against the African American community since he first took a knee as an SF 49er. His courage in the forefront of anti-racist struggle inspired much of the NFL to take a knee, leading athletes to protest police violence and to boycott sporting events following the murder of George Floyd.

We have seen Kaepernick walk the walk, leading us to support him in his collusion case against the NFL. He supported Castlemont high school footballers when they knelt during the national anthem. He provided hot meals and equipment to teams. He hosted an “I Know My Rights Camp” for Bay Area students of color, which has blossomed into the national “Colin Kaepernick I Know My Rights Legal Initiative.”



## The International Workers Committee Demands Mumia's Immediate Release

Written in March 2021

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

Mumia Abu-Jamal needs to be released from prison and sent to a hospital for proper medical attention.

But that is not all. Mumia needs to be released from prison altogether, based on his documented innocence and his medical condition, which in itself should be sufficient to warrant his release.

We urge you to contact Pennsylvania Governor Tom Wolf, Secretary of Pennsylvania Prisons John Wetzel, and Philadelphia DA Larry Krasner with these three demands:

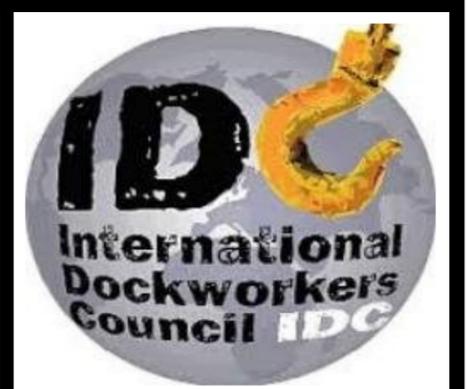
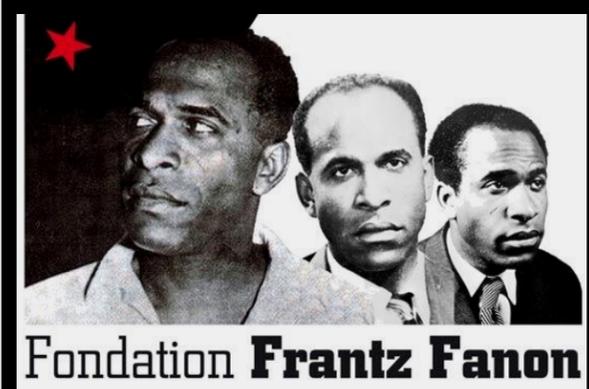
- **Transfer Mumia to a hospital for proper medical care!**
- **Free Mumia immediately!**
- **Free all elders, vulnerable inmates, and political prisoners!**

# Celebrating Mumia Abu-Jamal's 67th Birthday!



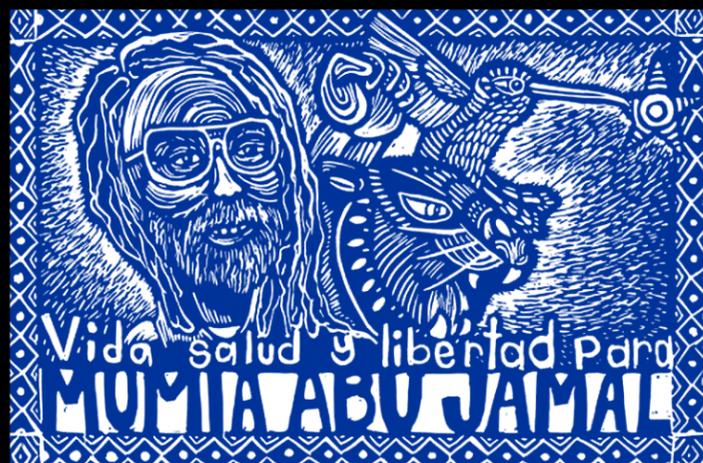
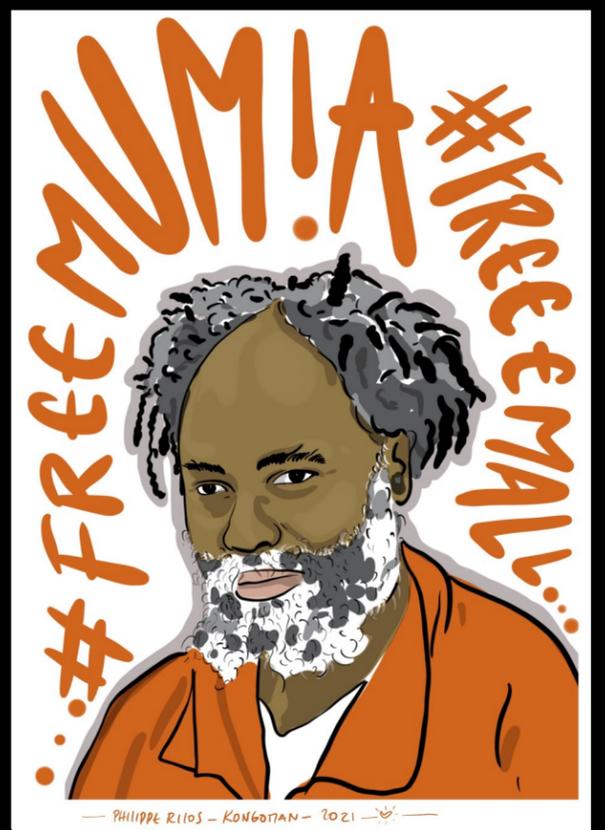
ABOVE: Philadelphia Birthday Celebration on April 24, 2021. Photos by Joe Piette.

BELOW: Logos of groups that supported Mumia during the Feb. / March health crisis.





APRIL 24 PHOTOS: Listed in a clockwise order from the top, Washington DC protest (above); Poster by artist Philippe Rios for Paris, France birthday event; Collectif Libérons Mumia protest at US Embassy in Paris, France; Protest in Houston, TX (photo by the Party for Socialism and Liberation); and Oakland, California (photo by David Rowland, ProBonoPhoto.org / Indybay.org).



# The Significance of the NUMSA Appeal to the World for Mumia Abu-Jamal

Written by Julia Wright

April 1, 2021

On March 10th 2021, Jack Heyman, a retired member of the International Longshoremen and Warehousing Union and longstanding member of the West Coast Labor Action Committee to Free Mumia Abu-Jamal shared with the Mumia and prison human rights' groups nationally and internationally a press release from the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA).

The South African press release called for proper healthcare for Abu-Jamal and all other prisoners who have tested positive for COVID-19. It stated that Abu-Jamal is a political prisoner whose "only crime is exposing the racist, capitalist justice system in the U.S. which for decades defended and supported the Apartheid government."

Importantly, NUMSA's statement to the world ends with these words: "We urge our comrades locally and around the globe to join us in this just campaign to free Mumia."

I am not a historian but I will submit to you five reasons why I believe the NUMSA statement already belongs to our History.

1) I have been privileged to be part of the struggle to free Mumia ever since he wrote in the early eighties from death row to my mother, Ellen Wright, and to me asking for help to prove his innocence.

Before then I had done international black liberation work whether it was with the Black Panther delegation to the first Cultural Pan-African Festival in Algiers or helping James Forman collect biographical interviews in preparation for his book on Frantz Fanon.

But above all, before that, I had worked as a journalist in the socialist Republic of Ghana as a staff member of the "L'Etincelle," the French version of "The Spark." The late President Kwame Nkrumah had set it up as the voice piece of the liberation movements against colonialism and neo-colonialism that he gave asylum and training to on his independent soil. As such my beginnings in journalism caused me to attend meetings alongside the FRELIMO of Mozambique, the MPLA of Angola, the PAIGC of Amilcar Cabral, the ANC and the UNITY movements of South Africa but also anti neo colonialist movements such as the UPC of Cameroon and Nigerian S.G. Ikoku's opposition party.

The CIA had its eye on this and the white power of the Volta Dam: they overthrew Nkrumah with the help of the local military in 1966. President Sekou Toure of Guinea offered Nkrumah co-Presidency and asylum in the spirit of Pan-Africanism.

This is why my late husband and I traveled to Guinea to attend the Funeral of Nkrumah on May 13th 1972. At the funeral, Amilcar Cabral delivered his

now famous eulogy called "The Cancer of Betrayal." Then we all gathered together for a wake at the villa where Nkrumah used to work on an open terrace by the sea.

At the time, I was completing a series of interviews on what African freedom fighters thought about our Black Power movement. When I asked Amilcar Cabral this question, he replied:

"I will answer your question as an agronomist. You, African-Americans, are seeds hibernating under the snow of North American capitalism. We, the freedom fighters on the periphery, will create with our victories, the climatic conditions, the Revolutionary Spring that will end up by thawing that snow. Your struggle will then bear its fruit. This is how I see our synergy."

These words, this analysis have since guided my international work in general and the work to free Mumia in particular. So it is not surprising that when solidarity statements started pouring in after the alarming news about Mumia's health, NUMSA's appeal to the trade unions of the world leapt out as an action Cabral would have ideologically welcomed.

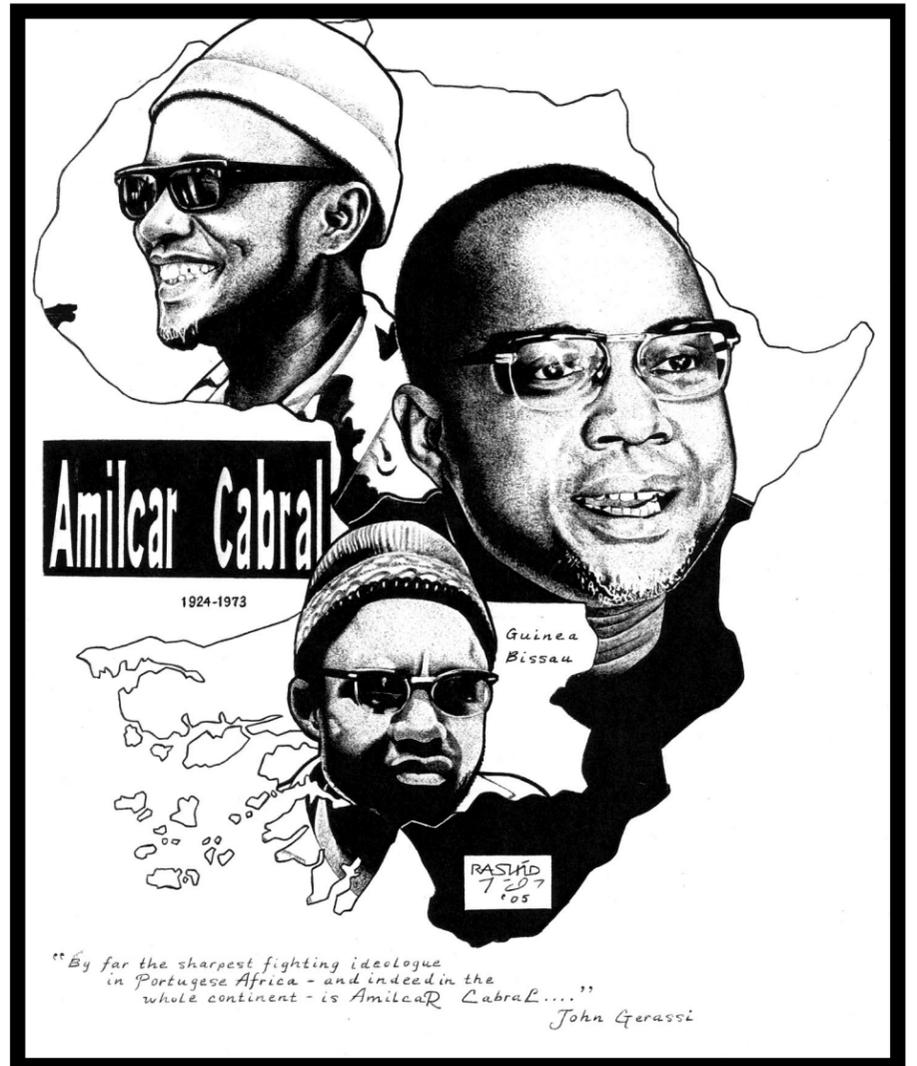
In the wake of the NUMSA call, the tsunami from the periphery continues to be amazing: Columbia, two statements from Mexico, the International Dockworkers Council, the Labor Party in the Philippines, the Alba Movimientos-Capitulo Brasil, The Palestinian Feminist Collective, the International Workers Committee, the 6th Region of the Pan-African Diaspora, the Rassemblement National Democratique in Senegal founded by Pr Cheikh Anta Diop, the Partido Obrero of Argentina, forty five Algerian students, professors, trade unionists and others.

As for Amilcar Cabral, he was assassinated less than a year after I interviewed him, by real bullets but viscerally by the neo colonialist "cancer of betrayal" he had warned Africa about.

2) Another reason that makes NUMSA's appeal for Mumia so historically relevant is that South Africa's form of Apartheid is close to what we have historically experienced and still undergo in the United States as our own forms of segregation from slavery to Jim Crow and the ghetto economy.

3) The solidarity of the civil rights and the Black Power movements with the struggle against Apartheid was remarkable in its consistency and its efficiency.

I would wish to mention my own small involvement in the anti-Apartheid support African Americans like myself were happy to offer. Caroline Hunter, a black Polaroid worker, wrote to me in Paris asking me to back her coalition of black Polaroid workers to force Polaroid to withdraw from South Africa. Caroline had happened to discover that her company was secretly helping the Apartheid regime to make the photos for the infamous "passes" the Blacks needed to enter forbidden white zones.



Artwork by Kevin "Rashid" Johnson 264847; Wabash Valley Correctional Facility, P.O. Box 500, Carlisle IN 47838

This divestment movement led by an African American worker sparked a far-reaching boycott and is recognized in South Africa as being instrumental in the downfall of Apartheid.

But other boycott movements were just as key such as the strike against South African ships by the Longshore Union on the West Coast credited by Nelson Mandela as sparking the anti-apartheid movement there. Today, the South African people have an abiding gratitude for our solidarity.

4) During the last days of Apartheid, there was a tense debate between the fascist, racist, land-owning Boers and Oppenheimer, DeBeers and other companies who owned huge diamond, gold and other metal ore mines employing millions of Black and Brown workers.

The debate was over which form of neocolonialism would prevail after independence. Would it be the Trump-like white supremacist neocolonialism advocated by the Dutch settlers? Or would it be the neoliberal model of neocolonialism advocated by the mine owners who needed to continue to attract and exploit Black and Brown workers as cheap subservient labor to maximize their ever soaring profits?

Thus the key importance of trade unions such as NUMSA to offset the post-independence corporate neo-colonialist paradigm. This debate is closely mirrored in our post-January 6th society in the United States today.

5) Last but not least, when Philadelphia District Attorney Larry Krasner was elected, he created a Conviction Integrity Unit that he proudly patterned on the iconic Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission that the late President Nel-

son Mandela tasked Desmond Tutu to create. Krasner's unit has to date exonerated at least 18 prisoners wrongfully convicted on the basis of the same racial bias, and the same police, prosecutorial, and judicial misconduct as Mumia underwent.

Unfortunately, DA Krasner is still adamant that he holds no legal key to open Mumia's prison door even at this stage of Mumia's guarded prognosis. Therefore, I would venture to raise the following questions:

Does DA Krasner know that the founding fathers of the model of reparative justice that he claims he supports (Mandela and Tutu), both specifically called for Mumia's immediate release back in 2013? Notably, their call for Mumia's release was even before his Hep-C, before his COVID-19 and before his congestive heart failure.

Is it a coincidence that among the 18 prisoners exonerated by Larry Krasner's Unit, there is no political prisoner?

Does Larry Krasner see political prisoners as radioactive?

Does Larry Krasner know that the same Nelson Mandela he so admires was a political prisoner before a people's movement liberated him?

## Conclusion

This is the testimony that I feel is timely to share concerning what I consider to be the milestone news of NUMSA's appeal to progressive groups and trade unions worldwide.

In the spirit of a Revolutionary Spring,

Julia Wright

April 1, 2021

# Mumia's Message to the Celebration of the International Day for the Victims of Slavery in Paris, France on March 27, 2021: Environments of Oppression (Free Keziah Nuissier!)

Introduction by Julia Wright

Knowing that during that day homage would be given to slavery victims past and present - including victims of post-George Floyd police racism and brutality in Europe and the rising scandal of the eco-genocide in the french caribbean islands - I decided to reach out to Mumia in the hope that his words could weigh on the organic synergy binding our Pan-African struggles. Also I knew that the ordeal of young Keziah who is preparing a BA in English would speak to him.

On July 16 2021 in Fort de France, the capital of the french colony of Martinique, a 22 year old brother called Keziah Nuissier was playing his ancestral drum during a peaceful picket protesting the arrest of a group of eco-freedom fighters who had opposed the use of a cancer-inducing pesticide called "chlordecone."

Chlordecone has long been forbidden in the United States and in France as a carcinogenic. Meanwhile its use in the french colonies of Guadeloupe and Martinique to enhance the profits from export crops has given rise to an ecological struggle against what is defined as "genocide" since 91% of the island's population is now contaminated and the resulting cancers target the prostate

and the womb.

On that July day, Keziah was arrested when he tried to protect his mother from the racist brutality of the "gendarmes" (the french militarized police). After a savage beating, he was dragged behind a police van and tortured.

When the gendarmes realized they were being filmed they undertook to spray the pavement to clean the blood, leaving the young man to bleed out in a corner. He survived but with severe psychological scars and has become the figure head of an unprecedented revolutionary movement.

As is so often the case, the victim himself was criminalized and now Keziah is being charged with police assault. The Prosecution meanwhile wishes to displace Keziah's trial to Paris under the pretext that the defense lawyers constitute "a physical threat" to them.

Frantz Fanon's iconic book, "The Wretched of the Earth," comes to mind. What would the native son of Martinique say today about the damned of his poisoned earth?

**--Johanna Fernández and Julia Wright teamed up to bring this message from Mumia to you.**

## Julia Wright's Statement for the Color of Change Petition

In 2013, both the late President Mandela and Archbishop Tutu called for Mumia Abu-Jamal's immediate release and that was before he almost died of Hep C and developed cirrhosis of the liver, before he was diagnosed with congestive heart disease and before the pandemic.

Today the biggest trade union in South Africa, The National

Union of Metalworkers (NUMSA), has called on all unions worldwide to join the campaign to save Mumia's life.

Mumia has been a voice for the voiceless since 14 years of age.

Today those he spoke up for worldwide are sending him the breath he needs to stay alive.

Today George Floyd's eight minutes and forty six seconds may begin at any time for Mumia and the boot on his neck is the corrupt Pennsylvania criminal justice system Larry Krasner embodies.

I call on all people to sign the Color of Change petition as we continue to demand Mumia Abu-Jamal's release.

## The National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA) demands the immediate release of American political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal

Written by NUMSA

March 10, 2021

The National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA), as the biggest trade union in South Africa, and one of the largest on the African continent, has made an urgent call to the Governor of Pennsylvania in the U.S. Mr. Tom Wolf to intervene in the case of Mr. Mumia Abu-Jamal.

Abu-Jamal, formerly known as Wesley Cook, was convicted of fatally shooting Philadelphia police officer Daniel Faulkner after Faulkner reportedly pulled over Abu-Jamal's brother during a late-night traffic stop in 1981. He has been in prison since 1982, and was on death row until 2011, when his death sentence was ruled unconstitutional. He is now serving a life sentence. We believe that he is innocent and has been framed by the corrupt

racist justice system in the U.S. He has been imprisoned for 38 years, mostly on death row.

In the letter we sent to the governor yesterday, we requested that he must urgently intervene to ensure that Abu-Jamal and all other prisoners who have tested positive for the covid-19 virus, receive urgent medical attention. Abu-Jamal's condition is rapidly deteriorating and there are fears that he may die. We also repeat calls for him to be released from jail. He is America's most prominent political prisoner, an award-winning journalist and former Black Panther. His only "crime" is exposing the racist, capitalist justice system in the U.S. which for decades defended and supported the Apartheid government for years.

It is our revolutionary duty as a Marxist-Leninist inspired trade union to defend the most vulnerable and to expose tyranny wherever it rears its

ugly head. During the dark days of Apartheid, the liberation movement was supported by progressive organizations putting pressure on the government to release political prisoners. That is the case now with Abu-Jamal and we are calling on all progressive formations, locally and abroad to support this campaign and help to pressurize Tom Wolf to act humanely, and to grant Mr. Abu-Jamal his freedom and his dignity. It is clear that the governor's refusal to provide Mr. Abu-Jamal with proper health care to fight this deadly infection is an attack on his fundamental right to healthcare. We urge our comrades locally and around the globe to join us in this just campaign to free Abu-Jamal.

Aluta continua!



PHOTO: Keziah Nuissier.

and brown people are the first to get sick, the first to get fired and the most to die from COVID-19 and also the last to get medical treatment, the last to get vaccines.

Where's the human rights there?

That question may be asked in the black world entire.

We join you in this day of resistance against slavery in all its forms, against the black world, and one of its greatest avatars, Frantz Fanon who wrote and worked and lived for the wretched of the earth.

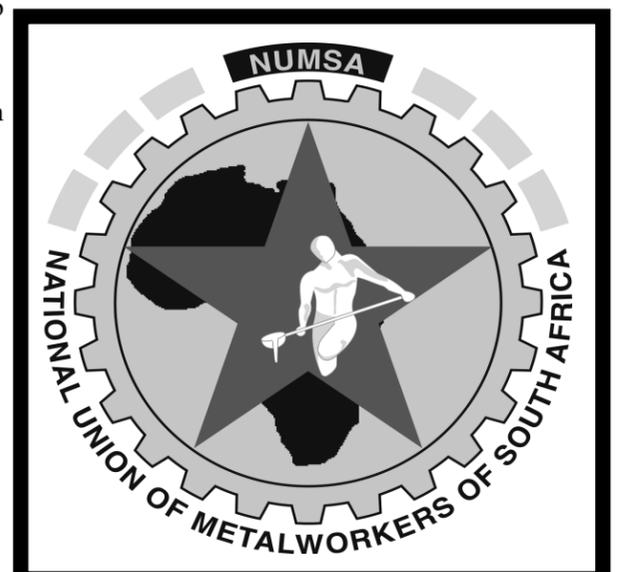
For Keziah! Free Keziah!



Petition artwork by Seth Tobocman, in Issue#1

The struggle continues!

Issued by Irvin Jim, NUMSA General Secretary; For more information, please contact: Phakamile Hlubi-Majola, NUMSA National Spokesperson; phakamileh@numsa.org.za Twitter: @phakxx Phone:+27833767725



# 'We are here to save a life': Mumia Abu-Jamal to undergo heart surgery —Supporters call for his release

By Emily Scott, WHYY

April 15, 2021

Supporters of Mumia Abu-Jamal hosted an emergency press conference Thursday, after news that the activist and former journalist, incarcerated for the killing of a Philadelphia police officer 40 years ago, will undergo heart surgery in the coming days.

According to Wadiya Jamal, his wife, and MOVE member Pam Africa, who normally speaks with Abu-Jamal daily, they had been unable to reach him for four days. On Wednesday, Abu-Jamal's lawyer informed his close supporters that he complained of chest pain while on a walk at SCI-Mahanoy in Schuylkill County and was taken to the prison infirmary. From there, Abu-Jamal was taken to an undisclosed hospital, where it was discovered that several of his coronary arteries were blocked, for which he will receive surgery.

Abu-Jamal had previously been diagnosed with congestive heart failure, diabetes, liver cirrhosis and, most recently, COVID-19.

"We are here to save a life, and we are here to fight for justice," said Marc Lamont Hill, a Temple University professor and owner of Uncle Bobbie's Books in Germantown.

Organizers of the press conference had a list of explicit demands regard-

ing Abu-Jamal's care:

--That before surgery, Abu-Jamal be allowed to call his wife; Pam Africa; his chosen doctor, Ricardo Alvarez; and his spiritual adviser, Mark Taylor

--That Abu-Jamal not be shackled in his hospital bed.

--That Abu-Jamal be immediately released from prison.

Johanna Fernández, a longtime advocate and supporter of Abu-Jamal, said that there are also concerns about the lack of information being provided to Abu-Jamal's closest allies, and that it went against his right as a patient that he was unable to contact his loved ones for days after his hospitalization.

"Think about the barbarism of a system that feels there is no right of a prisoner that the state must respect," said Fernández, a history professor at Baruch College in New York.

Alvarez, Abu-Jamal's chosen physician, has had little access to Abu-Jamal's current medical team and has not been informed regarding his patient's health and the steps being taken to treat him. During Thursday's press conference, Alvarez said he believes Abu-Jamal will undergo open heart surgery to treat his clogged arteries, but he added that demands for more information regarding his treatment have gone unmet.

A spokesperson for the Pennsylvania

Department of Corrections said they cannot comment on a prisoner's health.

The latest calls for action for the release of Abu-Jamal come a month after a press conference at which his supporters said that he was diagnosed with COVID-19, that his breathing was "labored," and that he was experiencing pain in his chest.

"A question we have ... Mumia was just hospitalized ... and if he had blocked arteries and they conducted a battery of tests, shouldn't some of that been identified?" Fernández asked. "You are clearly not doing what needs to be done to save the life of another human being."

Angela Davis, a renowned scholar and political activist for incarcerated people, said Abu-Jamal's condition mirrors that of so many others behind bars.

"He needs us to stand with him as he confronts the brutal power of the state and as he tries to grapple with his medical condition, produced and exacerbated by prison authorities," Davis said. "This is our time to represent our collective rage over his treatment and treatment of other aging prisoners."

As Abu-Jamal's personal physician, Alvarez said that his patient has medically documented evidence of harm, noting that his cirrhosis of the liver is due to the deliberate holding back of lifesaving medications to treat the dis-

ease.

"One of the greatest harms to Mumia is state violence," Alvarez said. "We support Mumia from the only possible treatment, which is freedom."

Hundreds of people across the world attended the press conference via Zoom, including participants in Austria, Greece, Martinique, and elsewhere in the United States.

Abu-Jamal's 67th birthday is April 24. A weekend of action was already planned prior to his latest health problems, including a City Hall rally on his birthday.

In December 1981, Abu-Jamal was charged with the murder of Philadelphia police officer Daniel Faulkner. Throughout his 40-year incarceration, Abu-Jamal and his supporters have maintained his innocence, despite several upheld convictions and denied appeals.

In December 2020, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court denied a petition filed by the slain officer's widow, Maureen Faulkner, asking for District Attorney Larry Krasner's office to be removed from handling future appeals in the case.

—Emily Scott is a multimedia producer for WHYY News. A 2018 graduate of the journalism program at Temple University, Emily was formerly an intern in the WHYY newsroom.

## Mumia Abu-Jamal: Professorial with a Touch of Pirate

By Noelle Hanrahan  
(www.prisonradio.org)

April 17, 2021

It is hard to write while crying. But let me try.

Mumia Abu-Jamal is awkward and funny. He walks slowly, slow foot. Deliberately. Lumbering.

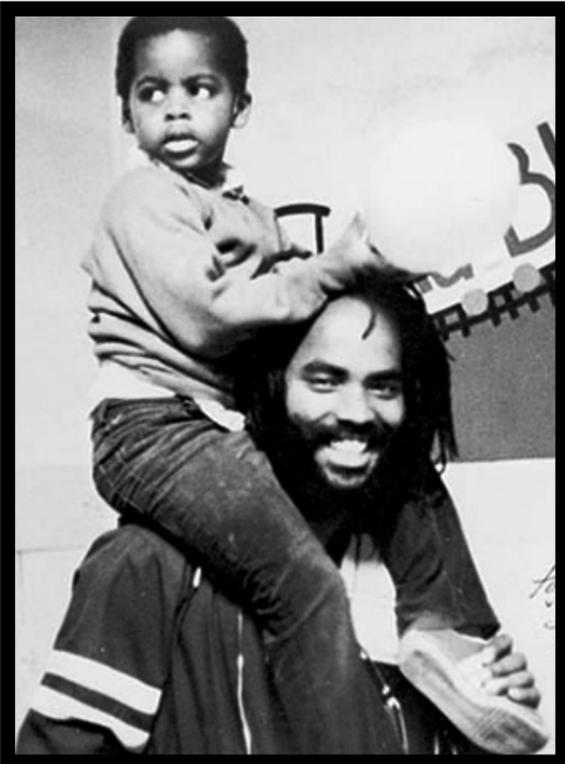


PHOTO: Mumia w/ his son Mazi, before arrest.

He has a big broad and warm and an open smile. His hug is thick and solid, it is like you are hugging a giant grandpa, but can reach only halfway up, as he leans over.

His beard is scraggly and gray, neat but consciously, deliberately, unconfirming. Always his own. Dreads were rare in America when he first wore them. He flips his locks from his face with the back of his hand. He is professorial with a touch of pirate, half glasses resting on the bridge of his nose, as he leans forward to read. Every piece of paper a treasure.

When he is shocked or surprised, he leans back, crooks his head and narrows his eyes and gives a penetrating and quizzical look. Open. Questioning. Searching. Not quite vulnerable, but open. "Really, why?" he might ask.

He loves chocolate, pastry and cheesecake, and hoagies. He will choose salad if available. He drinks water or a ginger tea, never soda. When he laughs, his whole body laughs, hearty, loud, and he snorts. He can be sonorous,

radio preachy, in a way even when talking. It is easier to report, than be the story. That is why he so rarely talks about himself in his public work. He loves to listen. His observations are his way of being in the world with us. He is consciously building a bridge with us, by sharing himself on the airwaves.

He is guarded with all emotions except love and concern for others.

He recognizes how much he has lost. When he lets himself realize, the years have turned to decades of loss, he has a resolute fierceness born of a love of himself and his family and ancestors. Instinctually he cannot compromise his and their principals and integrity. He cannot be polite and allow false promises, or white lies. Some men might be consumed by anger. But I have never seen him hold onto anger, or act from anger in person, or personally. Never.

I have seen him be deliberate in writing, pushing, or pulling away, by re-treating to his internal world, or defending others by trying to shield them from harm. He loves fiercely and unconditionally.



PHOTO: Pam Africa visits Mumia after his transfer off death row in 2012.

His loyalty to his family is all encompassing. His greatest sorrow is that all of his efforts to be there for his grandchildren, and great grandchildren, cannot match what he would give if he were able to live with them.

Mumia loves with an enormous and unfailing and gigantic heart.

Mumia, as you begin your journey to recover from your heart surgery, we will be with you. We will send love and letters. We will scale the mountain of freedom and bring you back home with us.

—Noelle Hanrahan, co-director of Prison Radio, has been recording Mumia's essays for over 25 years.

# 'Shackled to a bed': UN experts condemn US treatment of Black journalist

By Azad Essa in NYC

(www.middleeasteye.net)

April 21, 2021

On Tuesday, progressive movements and proponents of the Black Lives Matter movement breathed a sigh of relief when a 12-member jury in Minneapolis found Derek Chauvin guilty of murdering George Floyd, the unarmed Black man whose death sparked a movement against police brutality in the US and across the world last year.

Commemorations took place at the road intersection in Minneapolis where bystanders had pleaded with Chauvin, 45, to remove his knee from Floyd's neck.

Further rallies were planned for Wednesday across major cities in the US, as activists looked to draw attention to a rare indictment and conviction of a police officer accused of killing someone while on duty.

But just as politicians took to social media and network television to discuss how the verdict might reinvigorate America's long walk towards redressing racial injustice, a group of UN human rights experts issued a scathing statement about the conditions under which an elderly and ailing African American man is being held in a Pennsylvania prison.

The UN High Commission of Human Rights said in a statement that Mumia Abu-Jamal, a 67-year-old former Black Panther member and journalist, in jail for allegedly killing a police officer in 1981, was shackled to a hospital bed and subject to "unnecessary suffering" in conditions it described as "deplorable".

"This ongoing and continuing cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment, including deliberate disregard of his dignity and inhumane conditions of confinement, is a clear violation of Mr Abu-Jamal's most fundamental rights," the experts added.

"International standards on the treatment of prisoners clearly stipulate that instruments of restraint are to be imposed only when no lesser form of control would be effective to address the risks posed by unrestricted movement," the statement read.

Maria A Bivens, press secretary for the Department of Correctional Services (DOC) in Pennsylvania, told Middle East Eye that the DOC was "following all legal and internal policies and procedures as it relates to the health and well-being of inmate Abu-Jamal."

"Because of confidentiality, I cannot address certain statements in the release that are inaccurate," Bivens said.

Meanwhile, activists following Abu-Jamal's situation accused authorities of trying to accelerate his death.

"It does appear like an attempt to try and kill him in prison," Suzanne Ross, an activist and long time supporter of Abu-Jamal, told MEE.

"The United States gets a way with a lot of things. There is a huge prevalence of police brutality. So many Black people have been killed by the police. Everyone is making a fuss about the jury finding Chauvin guilty, when it is such an exception to the rule."

"And you cannot be fooled by that. They gonna play this up by showing that America is great.

"I think its very significant that this

UN report came out on the same day as the conviction and it shows a greater determination to do something about these crimes in the US," Ross added.

## Always Maintained Innocence

Abu-Jamal was a part-time cab driver and journalist who wrote critical pieces about the ways in which the police treated MOVE, a Black radical group based in Philadelphia.

In 1981, he was arrested for the murder of a police officer named Daniel Faulkner.

Abu-Jamal has always maintained his innocence, with his supporters claiming he was framed by the Philadelphia police department; his case reportedly tangled in a series of irregularities.

Following a series of appeals, in 2011, his death sentence was commuted to life in prison, though he remained mostly in solitary confinement.

For years prior to the case, Abu-Jamal was reportedly targeted by the FBI's COINTELPRO programme which sought to interfere and discredit political dissidents, such as the Black Panthers. During his trial, Joe Davidson, president of the Association of Black Journalists, accused the media of being obsessed with his religion and political beliefs.

In 2000, Amnesty International published a 31-page report in which it concluded that "the proceedings used to convict and sentence Mumia Abu-Jamal to death were in violation of minimum international standards that govern fair trial procedures and the use of the death penalty [...] the interests of justice would best be served by the granting of a new trial to Mumia Abu-Jamal."

According to the UN statement, Abu-Jamal was not only denied visits from his family and lawyers, he was also placed in an undisclosed hospital for heart surgery that took place last week.

"The department does notify inmate designated next-of-kin of health updates regarding incarcerated individuals who are out of the facility for certain medical procedures. In addition, the department has allowed for inmates to talk to their families while hospitalized," Bivens from the DOC, said.

Abu-Jamal also suffers from cirrhosis of the liver caused by Hepatitis C, a severe skin condition, as well as hypertension. He also contracted Covid-19 in late February.

On Tuesday, Ross told MEE that their demands remained the same.

"We want him to be treated with dignity while he is in their care, but we still want him to be released because he is innocent," Ross said.

"When Barack Obama was president, our movement unravelled a little because of the excitement around a Black president being in charge. I am happy that people are a lot less naive about Biden's ability to change things... there isn't the same seduction as there was with Obama.

"There are thousands of people like Mumia in prison, so when we struggle for Mumia, we are struggling for everybody," Ross added.

*--Azad Essa is a senior reporter for Middle East Eye based in New York City. He worked for Al Jazeera English between 2010-2018 covering southern and central Africa for the network.*

## UN Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner Statement: "Shackling of aged inmate, Mumia Abu-Jamal, is deplorable"

GENEVA (20 April 2021) – UN human rights experts\* expressed serious concerns about the treatment and welfare of Mumia Abu-Jamal, an African-American man who has been in jail for 40 years in Pennsylvania, and is reportedly shackled to his hospital bed. Mr. Abu-Jamal had already been shackled to his bed during a four-day hospitalization in late February while being treated for heart failure.

Mr. Abu-Jamal has been denied visits from his family and access to his lawyers and spiritual advisor after being admitted to an undisclosed hospital around 10 April, where he will reportedly undergo surgery. "This ongoing and continuing cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment, including deliberate disregard of his dignity and inhumane conditions of confinement, is a clear violation of Mr. Abu-Jamal's most fundamental rights," the experts added. Neither his family nor lawyers have been informed of his medical condition and treatment.

"The use of shackles during his hospi-

tal stays is deplorable, and causes Mr. Abu-Jamal additional and unnecessary suffering," said the experts.

"International standards on the treatment of prisoners clearly stipulate that instruments of restraint are to be imposed only when no lesser form of control would be effective to address the risks posed by unrestricted movement."

As well as a chronic heart condition, Mr. Abu-Jamal, now 67, suffers cirrhosis of the liver caused by Hepatitis C, hypertension and a severe skin condition. In late February, he was also diagnosed with COVID-19.

"We are concerned that the medical condition of Mr. Abu-Jamal could be linked to years of medical neglect by the Department of Corrections of the state of Pennsylvania," the experts said. "This situation may also be the result of racial discrimination against people of African descent by prison and state authorities.

"We call on the authorities to take all urgent measures to protect the physical integrity, life and dignity of Mr. Abu-

Jamal, in line with international human rights obligations.

"Communication and access for Mr. Abu-Jamal's family and advisors should immediately be restored with Mr. Abu-Jamal and with all relevant personnel involved in his health and conditions of confinement. The state must also immediately cease withholding information and access relevant to monitoring the status of Mr. Abu-Jamal's human rights.

"We also call on the authorities to urgently address allegations of discrimination, including racial discrimination, in the medical treatment of prisoners in Pennsylvania, and to take all necessary measures to protect the physical integrity and life of all detainees, in particular older prisoners and prisoners with disabilities who seem to have been disproportionately affected by COVID-19," the experts added.

Mr. Abu-Jamal, a former activist and journalist, was charged with the murder of a police officer in 1981. He denies the charges.

The experts have written to the Government to express their concerns.

## (statement ends)

\*The experts: Ms. Dominique DAY (Chairperson), Mr. Ahmed REID, Mr. Michal BALCERZAK, Mr. Sabelo GUMEDZE, Mr. Ricardo A. SUNGA III, Working Group of Experts of People of African Descent, Gerard Quinn, Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities, Ms. Tlaleng Mofokeng, Special Rapporteur on the right to physical and mental health, Claudia Mahler, Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons, Mr. Nils Melzer, Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

The Special Rapporteurs are part of what is known as the Special Procedures of the Human Rights Council. Special Procedures, the largest body of independent experts in the UN Human Rights system, is the general name of the Council's independent fact-finding and monitoring mechanisms that address either specific country situations or thematic issues in all parts of the world. Special Procedures' experts work on a voluntary basis; they are not UN staff and do not receive a salary for their work. They are independent from any government or organization and serve in their individual capacity.

For more information and media requests, please contact Christina Saunders (csaunders@ohchr.org or africandescent@ohchr.org).

# A Robeson-Influenced Prayer and Birthday Greeting from England

Written by Tayo Aluko  
Jamal Journal Website  
April 15, 2021

It was Paul Robeson who introduced us, albeit he'd been dead for 32 years. My new acquaintance had been locked away in prison for 26 years, and was still contesting a death sentence.

The venue was the Oakland City Hall, and the occasion the grand opening, on what would have been Paul Robeson's 110th birthday – April 9, 2008 – of an exhibit by the Bay Area Paul Robeson Centennial Committee, on Robeson. I had just arrived from Irvine, CA, where I had given my first-ever US performance of my one-man play, *Call Mr. Robeson*, and was due to reprise it the following day. I was staying with people I had never met, but who nonetheless willingly welcomed my pianist and me into their home, because a mutual friend in Liverpool had told them I was coming over to tell Robeson's story. A choir sang South African freedom songs. I performed an extract from the play. I shook the hand of Ron Dellums, then Mayor of Oakland, heard him speak, and would learn only later that he was a very distinguished politician – a former congressman who, among other things, had been instrumental in getting the US government to reluctantly issue sanctions against Apartheid South Africa, hastening that regime's demise.

I was introduced to active members of the ILWU longshoremen's union, which had proudly made Robeson an honorary member. These men told me they had not only organised boycotts of South African ships, refusing to load and unload them, but also supported the dockers' struggle in Liverpool.

Harry Belafonte's familiar raspy tenor voice was next heard, as his message was played on a tape machine. A veteran even then, he said that Paul had been his mentor, guide and inspiration as a young man.

And then we heard this strong, clear, baritone voice declare, from the same machine, "Paul, the magnificent!" The speaker went on to recall what a huge impression was made on him by Robeson's defiant answer to one member of the House Un-American Activities Committee who had asked why Robeson didn't move to Russia. "Were this a movie," this voice said of Robeson's answer, "it would require a clap of thunder to mark this dramatic moment." He remarked at how, despite his fame and fortune, Robeson had refused to lose sight of the battle faced by the majority of his fellow Americans, Black or otherwise, and lamented at how so few present-day people in similar positions were brave enough to express similar views. The message finished with, "How much such art as

he produced is needed now.... From Death Row, this is Mumia Abu-Jamal."

Who? From Death Row? How is that possible? I found out since of course that Mumia had somehow been able to continue his pre-imprisonment journalistic profession by broadcasting regularly from behind bars, and, thanks to the internet, reaches all round the globe with his revolutionary eloquence. This is reminiscent of Robeson himself, who, when prevented by his government from leaving the USA between 1950 and 1958, was able, thanks to the newly laid Trans-Atlantic cable, to present a whole virtual concert to an audience at St. Pancras Town Hall, London, on May 26, 1957, and then sing to the Miners' Eisteddfod in Porthcawl, Wales, on October 5.

The St. Pancras concert had been presented by the Let Robeson Sing campaign, which saw prominent artists team up with trade unions and the general public to pressure the US State Department to restore Robeson's right to travel. That campaign was probably only exceeded by the Free Mandela campaign decades later, and one could argue that the campaign to Free Mumia not only follows in that great tradition, but also places Abu-Jamal in the same league as the other two.

Mumia has spent much longer in jail as a political prisoner (forty years) than Mandela did, but there is one other interesting, maybe controversial comparison to make. Madiba would perhaps never have been freed and gone on to assume the presidency of his country, had he not made certain compromises which would prevent post-Apartheid South Africa from achieving its promise and potential. On the occasion of Mandela's death, Mumia himself wrote and recited another beautiful essay which he titled "Mandela Sanitised," finishing it with this uncomfortable truth:

"South African independence ... opened the door to elective office but closed the door to South Africa's vast wealth by putting it in private hands. Dr. Nelson Mandela was hired to consolidate this state of affairs."

As I have written elsewhere, as Barack Obama revelled in his top-billing at the world's most watched funeral, he chose not to see the irony of his words of praise for Mandela's courage as an activist who was unafraid to speak truth to power, and as a political prisoner. Obama's eulogy belied the fact that back home, the system he oversaw held people like Mumia, Leonard Peltier and Chelsea Manning in prison, and that both Julian Assange and Edward Snowden had



PHOTO: Giant public mural honoring Paul Robeson at 45th and Chestnut Streets in West Philadelphia. Original painting by Peter Pagast (restored by Ernel Martinez). Photo by Steve Weinik, Mural Arts Philadelphia.

been granted political refuge by the Ecuadorian and Russian governments.

Halfway through Obama's second and final term, many had started discussing the possibility of Mumia receiving a Presidential Pardon as the country's first Black President left office. It is the measure of Abu-Jamal that he was nonetheless brave and honest enough to continue recording several commentaries critical of Obama. In one, he reacted to Obama's criticism of the Black Lives Matter movement for "yelling at political leaders." Mumia placed it in the context of past civil rights struggles, and quoted from one-time-political-prisoner Dr. Martin Luther King Jr's Letter from a Birmingham Jail. He finished his essay by saying, "Black Lives Matter's yelling ain't the problem. Far too often, the problem is politicians, who make deals –while Black people die."

I offer one last example of Mumia doing exactly what Robeson repeatedly stated as his life's mission: to use his art as his weapon in defence of all oppressed people. On April 23, 2016 – the day before his own birthday – Mumia discussed how treatment for Hepatitis C (a condition he had, but this wasn't about him) cost over \$100,000, thanks to the chokehold that Big Pharma – and in this instance, a company called Gilead Sciences – has over the health industry. Mumia again evoked Robeson, referring to Paul's 1958 Carnegie Hall concert. Revealing the quality of his own baritone by singing the opening lines of one of the songs Paul had sung at that concert, *Balm in Gilead*, he titled his essay, *Is There a Balm In Gilead?* and finished it with this simple, powerful truth: "If you can't afford it, you die."

Such honest appraisal of one's own country, even though done from a place of love, has grave consequences, as people like Dr. King and Malcolm X well knew, as does Mumia himself. So did Paul Robeson. He became a prisoner of conscience of sorts when, in addition to losing his passport, he found recording and performing opportunities denied him for eight long

years, at great financial, physical and mental cost.

It is nothing short of remarkable, and even miraculous, that Mumia has survived so long in the literal rectum of the beast with his incredibly impressive mental faculties so intact. He has also battled bravely against disease and deliberate medical negligence. As I write this, he is shackled to a hospital bed in preparation for heart surgery, not long after having contracted Covid-19. Despite forty years of such cruel and inhumane treatment, Mumia has somehow retained a deep humanity. In that 110th birthday tribute, he recalled Robeson talking about having had opportunities that his sharecropper relatives had been denied. Robeson was of course speaking for the majority of Black America. He could have been speaking of Mumia too, for when such an undeniably unusual talent is forced to spend the majority of his life behind bars because of his politics, not only is he being denied the opportunity to flourish and to contribute to society to his full potential, but his country and the world are being denied the benefit and the pleasure of his physical freedom.

This article was originally intended as a simple birthday greeting to a man who I am willing to bet was, in addition to all his remarkable qualities, a great sportsman and actor as a young man, just like Paul Robeson. I send it off with a prayer to the ancestors, to the universe and all higher powers, that on April 24, we will all indeed be celebrating the life of the one man capable of surviving this last of several attempts on his life:

Mumia, the Magnificent!

Ona Move!

—Tayo Aluko is a Nigerian writer, actor and singer living in Liverpool, UK. He has been touring internationally with his one-man play, "Call Mr. Robeson" since 2008, and has recently written and released a new radio play, "Paul Robeson's Love Song," recorded during lockdown, is now streaming online.

[www.tayoalukoandfriends.com](http://www.tayoalukoandfriends.com)

# April 24 Weekend Birthday Events in Philadelphia Say: Let Mumia OUT!

By Marie Kelly, Workers World

April 27, 2021

An international coalition of groups supporting Mumia Abu-Jamal held events April 23-25 to commemorate his 67th birthday (April 24) and call for his freedom. Mumia has been unjustly incarcerated for nearly 40 years. His health has deteriorated due to the harsh conditions he has endured under an unjust carceral system. He is currently hospitalized following triple bypass surgery on April 20.

The People for Mumia, a virtual event April 23, kicked off the weekend. Activists, musicians, writers and youth shared why Mumia is important to their movement for social and racial justice. Speakers and performers included Mike Africa Jr., Susan Abulhawa, Angela Davis, Marc Lamont Hill, Robin D.G. Kelley, Colin Kaepernick, Tom Morello, Albert Woodfox, Erica Caines, Santiago Alvarez, Monica Moorehead and more.

On April 24, over 1,000 people gathered in Philadelphia for a rally and march. "Taking It to the Streets for Mumia" began at City Hall across from where the statue of racist Frank Rizzo was removed in 2020 due to public outcry against his brutal legacy.

Dr. Johanna Fernandez spoke against the corrupt legal system and explained how the Philadelphia police worked "hand in glove" with the prosecution and racist judge in Mumia's 1982 trial. Evidence has surfaced indicating the prosecution bribed a key witness.

Pam Africa gave news of Mumia's health, after having spoken briefly with

Mumia earlier in the day. He is still hospitalized, but said he is beginning his recovery by taking some short walks. He confirmed he is shackled while in his bed. Mumia's medical advisor Dr. Ricardo Alvarez traveled from California to speak at the event.

Mumia's brother, Keith Cook, traveling from North Carolina, told the gathering that they must continue to fight until his brother is free. YahNé Ndgo, Immortal Technique and Ellect performed, and the crowd sang along to Stevie Wonder's "Happy Birthday." Speakers included Chairman Fred Hampton Jr. and Immortal Technique.

Susan Abulhawa connected the struggle for Black liberation with the free Palestine movement. Her thoughts about Mumia's character and spirit inspired: "Mumia teaches us what it is to be free in our minds. He was a Black man who was too free, and that is why they locked up his body."

Dr. Suzanne Ross spoke about the U.N. Human Rights Commission's support for Mumia. Events calling for Mumia's release were held in France, Germany, Mexico, French Guiana, Britain and the Netherlands, and in several U.S. cities April 24.

A powerful moment came when Janine Africa, Janet Africa, Sekou Odinga, Jihad Abdul-Mumit and Kazi Toure, five liberated political prisoners, stood together on the stage. The group has spent a combined over 150 years behind bars.

The rally moved into the streets for a spirited march from City Hall to the Art Museum, carrying banners and signs and shutting down traffic along the Benjamin Franklin Parkway.



PHOTO: April 24, 2021 in Philadelphia. Photo by Joe Piette.

The march stopped at the site of last year's houseless encampment, calling attention to the city's inability to provide basic services to the most vulnerable. Fired by Amazon for speaking up for workers rights, Chris Smalls, with the Congress of Essential Workers, called for support of Amazon workers organizing. The rally continued on the Art Museum steps.

Larry Holmes spoke about how Frank Rizzo, "the most racist police chief," waged war on the Black Panthers, MOVE and the entire Black community in Philadelphia. Janine Africa warned that we must not let the police kill Mumia like they killed the incarcerated MOVE family members Phil Africa and Merle Africa. Delbert Africa was freed, but succumbed only six months after his release to illness caused by inadequate health care during his incarceration.

Performers included Dominique London and the Universal African Dance and Drum Ensemble. Basiymah Muhammad Bey from the United Negro Improvement Association also spoke.

Travelling from Boston mYia X raised the memory of Winnie Mandela and Shaka Sankofa and borrowed from the words of Ella Baker, saying "We who

believe in freedom, cannot rest until we bring Mumia home."

Jamal Hart, Mumia's grandson, called on the younger members in the crowd to take up the fight to free Mumia. Calling for his grandfather to spend his next birthday surrounded by his family and friends, he chanted: "No more birthdays in prison."

The coalition sponsored events in West Philadelphia April 25 honoring Walter Wallace Jr., murdered by Philadelphia police six months ago in 2020, and Russell Maroon Shoatz, imprisoned since 1972 and suffering from stage 4 cancer. Members of Shoatz's and Wallace's families participated in the event that kicked off a community cleanup at the Maroon Garden, followed by a march to Malcolm X Park for a speakout.

Food Not Bombs Solidarity provided snacks and water for the events on both days. Visit LetMumiaOut.com or Mobilization4Mumia.com for more information on Mumia's health, endorsers or upcoming events.

--Marie Kelly is a member of Workers World Party in Philadelphia, PA and the writer of "On the Picket Line," a biweekly feature. @workers.org.

## Houston, Texas Activists Honor Mumia on His Birthday

Written by Gloria Rubac

Workers World

April 27, 2021

Supporters of Mumia Abu-Jamal gathered in Houston on his birthday, April 24, to demand his immediate release and the release of all political prisoners.

"Mumia is a freedom fighter. He is a Panther. He is a captive of the state, because they want to kill him. It is up to all of us to fight for his freedom to get him out of that prison," John "Bunchy" Crear told a crowd gathered at historic Emancipation Park.

Crear joined the Black Panther Party as a youth, similar to Mumia, and con-

demned the decades of incarceration for so many Panthers, now elderly with medical issues.

Crear was joined at the mic by three other Panthers: James Aaron, Yusef Omowale and Claude Frost. Aaron took over as chair of the Houston Panthers after white police officers assassinated Carl Hampton July 26, 1970.

Another Houston Panther, Sandra Netter, sent her greetings and solidarity with Mumia from her bed in a local hospital.

Fanci Dee took the mic to say, "I'm here today because last summer after George Floyd's murder, I was kidnapped by the police, along with hundreds of other protesters. Ever since then, I have been thinking about why

this fight is so important to me. George Floyd should be alive. Dante Wright should be alive. We need to abolish the police, to abolish prisons, to abolish the death penalty. We are stronger together, and we can create a world without police and prisons where people can thrive and live and be happy."

Minister Abdul Haleem Muhammad with the Nation of Islam said, "When I think of Mumia, I think of Shaka Sankofa. I think of Clarence Brandley. We don't know if we could survive being innocent and being on death row. Mumia was a Panther, and you had to be bold to be a Panther. I think about the Panthers. They were not about guns. They were about feeding the children, educating the children, giving health care to the elders in the

community. Our unity is more powerful than an atomic bomb, so we must unite to free Mumia now!"

Several poems were spoken by Brown Beret Johnny Torres, a Chicano wordsmith treasured by all Houston activists.

Delia Perez Meyer sang "Las Mañanitas," a traditional song which Mexicans sing to honor a loved one on their birthday. Then everyone enjoyed a slice of cake that read "Free Mumia Now!"

The event was sponsored by the Texas Death Penalty Abolition Movement, the Black Panther Party Alumni Association, Workers World Party and Party for Socialism and Liberation. —Gloria Rubac writes for WW.

## April 24 Paris, France Protest for Mumia at the United States Embassy

Report written by Paris

Collectif Libérons Mumia

(www.mumiabujamal.com)

The Paris Collectif Libérons Mumia organised a meeting at the Place de la Concorde opposite the American Embassy in Paris today in response to Mumia's state of health and the secre-

tiveness surrounding his hospitalisation. Around two hundred people showed up for the event, including representatives from the trade union movement, political parties, groups opposing the death penalty as well as the hard core of Mumia supporters who have been congregating, rain or shine, every first Wednesday of the month for the last 25 years in order to liberate

Mumia.

The following organisations participated in the Paris event: NPA (new anti-capitalist party), LO (workers' struggle) CGT (important trade union), PCF (French communist party), MRAP (movement against racism and for friendship between peoples) POID (independent democratic workers' party). Also present were representatives

from the city authorities of Paris, Saint Denis and Villejuif.

Representatives from the organisations participating in the event, led by Jacky Hortaut and Claude Guillaumud, attempted to deliver a letter to the American embassy. They were informed that the letter could not be accepted and would have to be sent by post!

# If Mumia Abu-Jamal's Case Is a 'Non-Issue,' Why Have Media Gone to Such Lengths to Silence Him?

By Janine Jackson, Fairness & Accuracy in Reporting (www.fair.org)

May 1, 2021

Philadelphia public broadcaster WHYY (4/24/21) was one of the few outlets to report on an April 24 rally seeking the release from prison of Mumia Abu-Jamal. The story included important information on Abu-Jamal, who is serving a life sentence for the 1981 killing of Philadelphia police officer Daniel Faulkner.

It noted that the case has “drawn scrutiny” over claims of police, prosecutorial and judicial bias and misconduct. It cited new evidence released as part of the appeal process, including a note from a key prosecution witness asking the prosecuting attorney for money—the sort of evidence that Johanna Fernandez, a history professor and part of Abu-Jamal’s legal team, notes has in other instances led to a defendant either being set free or getting an immediate new trial.

Along with Fernandez, the piece includes the voices of Abu-Jamal’s brother Keith Cook, and MOVE member Pam Africa, as well as people who traveled from around the country to call attention to Abu-Jamal’s case, his current state of health—he has a number of debilitating conditions, and has just had heart surgery—and to put his story in a context of political prisoners here and around the world.

I confess I was still irked by WHYY using its lead paragraph to frame the story like this:

“The case has pitted Abu-Jamal’s supporters, including a long list of national and international celebrities who say he was framed, against police and their supporters, who resent the attention given to a man convicted of murdering a fellow officer.”

It bugs me, because those were the themes decades ago when Abu-Jamal was first convicted and sentenced to death (Voices With Vision, 4/27/21). That he was a “cause celeb” —and therefore, wink wink, something something about liberal Hollywood, no need to pay attention—and that the upset of anyone concerned about his deeply

flawed trial or his inappropriate sentencing was merely theatrical, because, after all, he was “convicted,” wasn’t he?

## Open To Lies

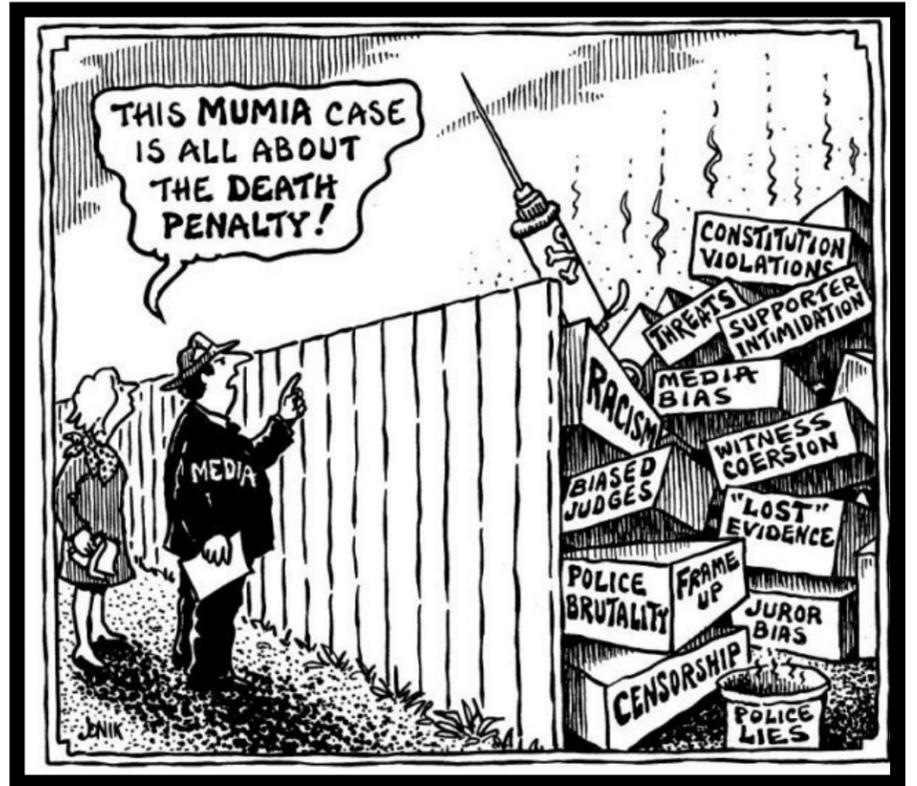
Elite media at the time were open to straight-up lies: A 1995 Washington Post story (5/18/95) led with a macabre account from Faulkner’s widow, Maureen Faulkner, about how when her husband’s bloody shirt was held up in court, Abu-Jamal turned around and smiled at her. Except attorney Leonard Weinglass and the court record show that Abu-Jamal wasn’t in court when the shirt was displayed (Extra! Update, 8/95).

ABC’s investigative news show 20/20 (12/9/98) employed a number of techniques for their big 1998 piece—stating prosecution claims as fact, even when they were disputed by some of the prosecution’s own witnesses or the forensic record; stressing how a defense witness admitted being intoxicated, while omitting that prosecution witnesses said the same (Extra! Update, 2/99).

At one point, actor and activist Ed Asner is quoted saying, “No ballistic tests were done, which is pretty stupid”—but then host Sam Donaldson’s voiceover cuts him off: “But ballistics test were done,” he says, referring to tests that suggested that the bullet that killed Faulkner might have been the same caliber as Abu-Jamal’s gun. But he didn’t note that tests had not been done to determine whether that gun had fired the bullet, or whether it had been fired at all, or if there were gunpowder residues on Abu-Jamal’s hands.

Producers from People’s Video Network told FAIR at the time (Extra! Update, 2/99) that ABC not only used clips they’d recorded from Abu-Jamal without permission, but they added layers of echo, making him sound, they said, “like a cave-dwelling animal.”

No one was too surprised when it was revealed that in a letter asking permission from the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections to interview Abu-Jamal (a request that was denied), 20/20 pointed out that “we are currently working in conjunction with Maureen Faulkner and the Philadelphia



Artwork by John Jonik, a longtime supporter of Mumia.

Fraternal Order of Police” (Extra! Update, 2/99).

## The Main Story Has Been No Story

After that, the main story has been non-coverage.

For instance, in 2006, when Abu-Jamal won the right to appeal on three grounds—including a jury purged of Black people, the prosecutor lowering jurors’ sense of responsibility by saying their decision “would not be final,” and the fact that judge Albert Sabo was all kinds of biased—the Philadelphia Daily News told reporter Dave Lindorff that it was a “non-issue” (Extra!, 3–4/06)—although when a judge overturned the death sentence in 2001, the paper (12/19/01) found time to editorialize: “Let Mumia Rot in Darkness.”

The late great media critic Ed Herman (Extra!, 9–10/00) reported how the Philadelphia Inquirer wouldn’t cover rallies and tribunals in support of Abu-Jamal, calling them “stunts,” but when the Fraternal Order of Police bought a full-page ad in the New York Times, that merited a story.

In 2000, when Amnesty International declared that the original trial was “deeply flawed,” the Inky (2/18/00) made it the fifth “news brief” on page 2B.

But if Mumia Abu Jamal’s case is a non-issue that only celebrities care about, why the active silencing?

In 1994, NPR cancelled plans for a series of commentaries from Abu-Jamal—who is, after all, a journalist, a former head of the Philadelphia Association of Black Journalists—after Senator Bob Dole threatened their funding. They said it was because it was a “highly polarized and political controversy”—which they proceeded to say nothing about for the

following year (Extra!, 11–12/95).

When Democracy Now! prepared to air commentaries, station KRTI, out of Philadelphia’s Temple University, cancelled the show and all of Pacifica news (Extra! Update, 4/97), with a station VP explaining: “What’s good enough for NPR is good enough for me.”

And when a Vermont college aired a taped commencement address from Abu-Jamal, it led Philadelphia lawmakers to throw together something called the Revictimization Relief Act, allowing crime victims or prosecutors to sue inmates whose behavior behind bars “creates mental anguish” for the victims. Clearly unconstitutional, violating both free speech and due process rights, it was dubbed the Silencing Act by many, who noted that it didn’t just curtail prisoners’ right to speak, but journalists’ and all of our rights to hear them (FAIR.org, 10/22/14).

Media’s response was a shrug: The New York Times ran an AP piece (10/21/14) with the headline “Pennsylvania: Gov Signs Law to Help Protect Crime Victims.”

Elite media would have us believe they are engaged in a serious reckoning with the racism of the US criminal justice system, that they care about over-incarceration and prison conditions. And keeping people behind bars just because powerful people want them there, and not due to the merits of their case? Well, that’s what Other Countries do.

If only there were a case, 40 years’ worth of case, that would allow them to explore those ideals—if not to do justice by Mumia Abu-Jamal (they can’t return what’s been taken from him), then to do some semblance of justice by their own claims of concern.

—Janine Jackson is FAIR’s program director and producer/host of FAIR’s syndicated weekly radio show CounterSpin.

## Mumia's Message to the Berlin Revolutionary May Day

To my brothers, my sisters, my friends in Germany: Welcome!

As we think about May Day, we think about the struggle all over the world for working people and for the working class all over the world to begin to be remembered, respected, and finally empowered to organize society in a humane, human-centered, anti-capitalist, anti-oppression way of life.

That struggle continues, as it must, and that's the way of the world, whether we're in Germany, the United States, India, Africa, and everywhere human beings gather and work and struggle and organize and hope. We have to think about class struggle and the struggle between human beings. To exalt the power of labor to transform human societies.

I thank you all and I wish you all a ferocious May First!



PHOTO: April 24, 2021 protest in Weisestr, Germany.

## Angela Davis and the ILWU Lead San Francisco May Day March

Written by Jack Heyman  
West Coast Labor Action  
Committee to Free Mumia

May 2, 2021

On May Day marches occurred around the U.S. and around the world. While it is a labor holiday celebrated in 100 countries it is not recognized here where it originated in 1886 over the struggle for the 8 hour work day and safer working conditions.

Arguably, the largest demonstration in the U.S. occurred in San Francisco where an estimated 4,000 marchers, trade unionists, community groups and leftists, gathered at the Embarcadero and marched to Civic Center to commemorate the 1934 Maritime and General Strike provoked by the police murder of two strikers.

The demands of the event organized by all Bay Area labor councils were: (1) to support passage of the PRO Act (Protection of the Right to Organize) after the defeated union organizing



TWO PHOTOS: SF May Day 2021. Photos by Terry Scussel, ProBonoPhoto.org (at Indybay.org)

drive at Amazon and (2) for racial justice.

Many marchers carried signs protesting racist police killings. The longshore union carried banners calling for Mumia's freedom. One from the 1999 Mumia rally in San Francisco read: "Stop the Execution of Mumia Abu-Jamal" which is relevant today given

Mumia's continued dire medical conditions and DA Krasner's court filing opposing his appeal rights.

Both Angela Davis and ILWU Local 10 President Trent Willis, called for Mumia's freedom. Willis led a chant from the podium: "An Injury to One is an Injury to All! Free Mumia Abu-Jamal."

The longshore union is organizing another Juneteenth port protest against police terror and systemic racism.

At last year's Juneteenth protest all West Coast Ports in Canada and the U.S. were shutdown as Angela Davis spoke and led the march of 25,000 out of the Port of Oakland to Oscar Grant Plaza.



## Solidarity Message from the SF Bay Area Mobilization to Free Mumia Abu-Jamal

Best and solidarity to the Jamal Journal. Your first 40-page incredible newspaper provided the facts and background on Mumia's case that will be deeply appreciated by the new generation of freedom fighters that are rallying to Mumia's cause. I urge Mumia supporters to read every word, a precise case history of the frame-up

operations of the criminal "injustice" system that today has been exposed more than ever. With 20 million in the streets last summer demanding Black Lives Matter, Mumia's freedom is closer than in a long while. We are proud to formally endorse the Color of Change petition to DA Larry Krasner, while fully understanding that winning

Mumia's freedom is contingent on our continuing efforts to build a broad, democratic and united mass movement across the country to champion Mumia's cause. We are confident that one day, sooner not later, we will see Mumia Abu-Jamal a free man, fully participating as a champion of every fight where humanity rises to new

heights to bring down the systemic racism and class domination that pervades every aspect of life in war-mongering corporate America. .

*In solidarity,*

**Jeff Mackler, Director, The Mobilization to Free Mumia Abu-Jamal**  
jmackler@lmi.net

# “I Am Here Because People Stood Right With Me. I Love the Hell out of All of Them.” —Noelle Hanrahan on Mumia’s First Contact Visit After Heart Surgery

By Noelle Hanrahan

(www.prisonradio.org)

May 7, 2021

“I am here because people stood right with me. I love the hell out of all of them.”

--Mumia Abu-Jamal, SCI Mahanoy in the visit room with Noelle Hanrahan, P.I., J.D. 5-7-21

Pam Africa told me the other day that we need “to put our eyes” on Mumia.

When I walked into the visiting booth, Mumia said: “Well, well, well! Way to scale these walls!” He chuckled. “How the hell did you get in here?”

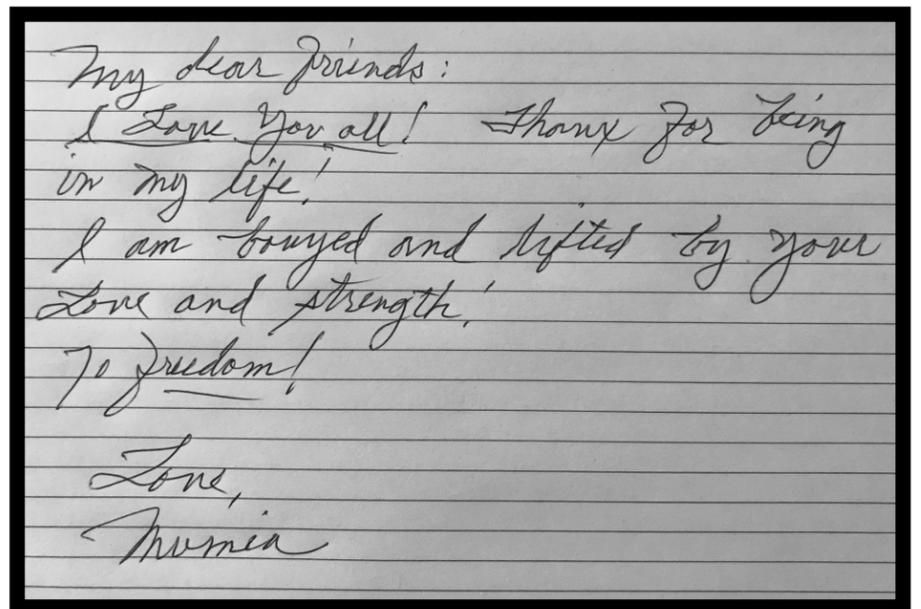
I shrugged and asked: “Since when have walls stopped us?” A hand-to-glass exchange of a high five. Then I said: “I just asked the guard to check for the contact visit that was approved by the Superintendent’s office yesterday, since you have cleared quarantine.” Mumia said: “Okay, let’s start talking and when he comes back, we can move.”

Ten minutes later, the visit continues without the plexiglass barrier when they let Mumia have a contact visit. After an elbow bump and a hug we sit down at a table in the entirely empty visiting area of SCI Mahanoy.

First let me say that Mumia looks great. He has energy. He was smiling broadly under his face mask. He was laughing and explaining how he has another chance to live. He sounded just like Tony the Tiger when he roars: “I feel great!”

I could imagine that having a working heart after months of congestive heart failure would contribute to his feeling ready to tackle his rehabilitation. Heart disease can be reversed, though getting the proper diet and exercise will be a huge challenge in a prison known for lockdowns. This current lockdown due to COVID, has lasted an entire year.

A long thin scar cuts all the way down his breastbone: The result of a double bypass open heart surgery just days ago. He is a trim 207 lbs. in a 6’1 frame and is now on path to recovery. He expects to be moved to general population very soon.



Mumia wanted everyone to know that he was aware that the movement made it possible for his condition to be taken seriously and finally accurately diagnosed. Mumia knows that if it were not for the world shining a bright hot spotlight on prison conditions and access to medical care, he fears that he would not have survived.

I always begin the process of leaving the visit, with this question for Mumia: “What do you want?” Mumia’s an-

swer: “I want to find a way to win and find a way to get the hell out of here.”

--Text of the hand-written message from Mumia to supporters:

*I love you all! Thanks for being in my life!*

*I am buoyed and lifted by your love and strength!*

*To freedom!*

*Love, Mumia*

## Black Lives Matter Movement Sparks Electoral Defeat for FOP

By Betsey Piette

Workers World

May 27, 2021

For decades, the endorsement of the powerful Philadelphia Fraternal Order of Police (FOP) was sought by almost every candidate running for office in the city and throughout Pennsylvania. Through the power of its purse strings, the FOP has been able to fill the courts with judges who favor capital punishment, high bail and long sentences, even for minor crimes. It could count on politicians to pass “get tough on crime legislation” and to look the other way when victims of police brutality demanded justice.

In his appeals in the late 1990s before the Pennsylvania Supreme Court, Mumia Abu-Jamal requested that Justice Ronald Castille recuse himself from the case. Mumia charged bias, because Castille had a role in his case as a former Philadelphia district attorney, and he received FOP backing. Castille responded that while he took FOP money, so had all the other judges on the state’s highest court.

The protests held in 2020, led by Black Lives Matter and other racial justice advocates following the police killings of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor, exposed the role of police “unions” in blocking reforms. And they created a climate in which FOP backing has become detrimental for a candidate.

In the May 18 Democratic primary election for Philadelphia district attorney, incumbent Larry Krasner overwhelmingly defeated his FOP-backed challenger, Carlos Vega, by getting 65% of the vote. This was despite Philadelphia FOP Lodge 5 spending \$140,000 to oust Krasner. This amount is more than the FOP spent in the city’s last seven electoral cycles.

The 14,000-member cop lodge donated over \$113,000 to the Protect Our Police Political Action Committee, which was launched by a group of retired police in 2020 to push Krasner out of office. That PAC spent \$134,000 on TV ads attacking Krasner. When it sent out a fundraising email blaming George Floyd for his own death, Vega renounced the group. But the damage to his election bid had already been done.

Exit interviews with voters found the primary election was seen as a choice between Krasner and the FOP. Vega’s loss may be the last stand for the FOP, which had backed other losing candidates in races for eight Philadelphia Common Pleas Court judge positions.

### Pittsburgh: Police Brutality a Key Issue

Police brutality impacted the primary in Pittsburgh, where “underdog” Ed Gainey defeated incumbent Bill Peduto in the mayoral race. Poised to become Pittsburgh’s first Black mayor, Gainey is favored to win the fall election in a predominantly Democratic city. Pittsburgh is, however, ranked as one of the worst places for Black people to live in

the U.S. The Abolitionist Law Center found that Black people, while only 23% of the city’s population, account for 70% of arrests.

Vega, a former homicide prosecutor, was one of 31 staffers fired when Krasner took office in January 2018. Vega’s campaign repeated the FOP’s line that Krasner was “soft on crime” and somehow “responsible for a rise in homicides and violent crimes,” which have wracked Philadelphia over the past year.

Scott Roberts, who is with the racial justice group Color of Change, stated: “People want to see these prosecutors’ offices being focused on bringing down incarceration rates and holding police accountable. And they’re actually looking for other solutions for violence; they’re not willing to buy into the narrative that they hear from police unions and conservative politicians.” (The Intercept, May 18)

### Abu-Jamal Case Exposes Krasner’s Weakness vs FOP

While applauding the FOP’s electoral defeat, many progressive activists continue to criticize Krasner for refusing to stand up to police in the appellant case of political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal.

In February 2021, Krasner filed briefs with the Pennsylvania Superior Court arguing against Abu-Jamal’s current appeals. He upheld decisions made in the mid-1990s by “Hanging Judge” Albert Sabo, a virulent racist.

In an interview with The Jamal Jour-

nal May 21, Abu-Jamal’s spiritual adviser, Mark Lewis Taylor, founder of Educators for Mumia Abu-Jamal, criticized Krasner for rubber-stamping every decision Sabo made at Abu-Jamal’s 1982 trial and his subsequent Post Conviction Relief Appeal hearings.

Taylor told the Journal: “All of Sabo’s courtrooms show at least a potential for racial bias, as well as many comments that offer clear evidence of racial bias. Krasner also knows that the bar for tolerating racial bias in courtrooms is set exceedingly low. . . . [yet] Krasner shows no interest in lowering the unfairly raised bar against Mumia. To perpetuate the state’s performance of that exception is to fail to be a prosecutor ‘for the people’ of Philadelphia.”

While even limited judicial reforms are welcome, there is little ground for hoping that the election of “progressive” prosecutors will make any serious long-term dent in the criminal injustice system. Both Krasner’s initial win and his successful bid for re-election resulted from a broad, multinational and diverse movement which has mobilized against racial injustice and police brutality. It is this movement, not Krasner, that holds the greatest potential for bringing about systemic change.

—Betsey Piette has been a tireless Mumia supporter/organizer for several decades. Betsey is a member of the Worker’s World Party and Mobilization4Mumia.com.

# The Key Findings of Linn Washington Jr. and Dave Lindorff's 2010 Ballistics Test

## Excerpted from our Color of Change petition to DA Larry Krasner

In 2010, investigative journalists Dave Lindorff and Linn Washington performed a test to see whether bullets fired into the sidewalk at close range would leave visible markings. The test was designed to replicate the shooting scenario presented at Mumia Abu-Jamal's 1982 trial by ADA Joseph McGill, alleging that Abu-Jamal stood directly over Officer Faulkner and fired downwards at him, execution style. According to McGill's theory, Abu-Jamal missed several times because Faulkner actively dodged the shots by rolling side-to-side, until the final shot entered Faulkner's forehead and killed him.

Lindorff and Washington sought to test a central argument of German author Michael Schiffmann's 2006 book *Race Against Death*, written as his PhD dissertation at the University of Heidelberg. Dr. Schiffmann examined the crime scene photos, including those taken by freelance photographer Pedro Polakoff, and concluded that there were no visible divots or markings in the pavement, which

Schiffmann asserted should have been visible if the testimonies of key prosecution eyewitnesses Robert Chobert and Cynthia White had been accurate. (The Polakoff photos are the very first photos taken of the crime scene. In addition to showing no bullet marks, the photos show that Robert Chobert's taxi was not where Chobert testified it was, that Police Officer James Forbes held two guns in his bare hand, and that police moved Officer Faulkner's hat from the top of Billy Cook's car onto the sidewalk where it would later appear in the official police crime scene photos.)

In 2010, Lindorff and Washington tested Schiffmann's assertion by firing a .38 caliber revolver several times into a concrete slab. They then closely analyzed the bullet marks left in the concrete slab. They concluded, without any ambiguity, that the bullets had indeed left visible markings. Therefore, if ADA McGill's theory (supported by Robert Chobert and Cynthia White's trial testimony) was truthful, there must have been similar bullet markings in the pavement next to where Officer Daniel Faulkner's body was found.

For their 2010 test, Lindorff and Washington had one of Pedro Polakoff's 1981 photos and a 2010 gun

test photo compared & analyzed by a NASA photo analyst named Robert Nelson. They concluded definitively that the 1981 photo did not show any markings similar to what was visible in the 2010 photo, meaning 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."

Before publishing their findings, Dave Lindorff and Linn Washington informed the Philadelphia DA's office about the results of their test, and specifically asked the DA for a quote to explain the lack of photographic evidence or testimony about bullet impact marks in the sidewalk around Faulkner's body. The DA's office responded to their questions with what Lindorff and Washington considered to be "a non-response." All the DA's office told them was: "The murderer has been represented over the past twenty plus years by a multitude of lawyers, many of whom have closely reviewed the evidence for the sole purpose of finding some basis to overturn the conviction. As you know, none has succeeded, and Mr. Abu-Jamal remains what the evidence proved – a murderer."

### ...Continued from page 1: Pam Africa Challenges Smerconish and Krasner

movement!

Mumia has been recovering well from the surgery, but for Mumia's recovery to continue, it is now imperative for Mumia to have access to nutritious food and plenty of exercise. We will be mobilizing around these demands in the coming months, but ultimately, as Mumia's consulting physician Dr. Ricardo Alvarez explains, "the only treatment will always be freedom."

### In the Spirit of Mandela Tribunal

Please help us publicize the upcoming In the Spirit of Mandela International Tribunal on US Human Rights Violations, to be held in New York City on October 22-24, 2021.

The Tribunal will be charging the United States government, its states, and specific agencies with human and civil rights violations against Black, Brown, and Indigenous people. Political prisoners will be a key issue presented at the Tribunal. Learn more at [www.spiritofmandela.org](http://www.spiritofmandela.org)

In solidarity with the October Tribunal, we are putting elderly political prisoners at the forefront of Jamal Journal Issue #2, with a focus on Sundiata Acoli, Russell "Maroon" Shoatz, Mutulu Shakur, Ed Poindexter, and Ruchell "Cinque" Magee. Please do everything you can to support their immediate release!

In Issue #3, to be released in late August, we are planning to focus on Jamil Al-Amin (formerly H. Rap Brown), David Gilbert, Leonard Peltier, Veronza Bowers and Alvaro Luna Hernandez (Xinachtli). Please support the freedom campaigns already working to bring them home. Freeing these elders could not be more urgent! As our newspaper goes to print, Maroon

Shoatz's condition is severe and has worsened, so he is now seeking a medical transfer.

We are also spotlighting two international political prisoners: Keziah Nuisier (Martinique) and Fidencio Aldama (Mexico).

### Consuewella Africa, Rest in Peace

The MOVE family is profoundly heartbroken by the passing of our dear sister Consuewella Africa on June 16, following weeks of hospitalization due to health complications resulting from the extreme stress and emotional pain caused by recently learning that the University of Pennsylvania and the City of Philadelphia had desecrated the remains of Delisha Africa and Consuewella's Daughter Tree Africa after they had been murdered on May 13, 1985.

On April 21, West Philadelphia activist/organizer Abdul-Aliy Muhammad's article in the Philadelphia Inquirer exposed the University of Pennsylvania Museum's theft of Delisha and Tree's remains. From there, the story kept unraveling with one new horror after another. In response to the tragic death of Consuewella Africa and the traumatic news about the desecration of murdered MOVE children's remains, our family is calling for the immediate release of political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal.

### The Fraternal Order of Police Campaign to Kill Mumia

Today, with all of Mumia's serious health problems, it is evident that Mumia could die in prison before actually having a new trial. That is why our Color of Change petition to DA Krasner is demanding Mumia's outright release.

Even if the Court makes future rulings in favor of Mumia's appeals, it will likely take several years or more before Mumia actually has the opportunity to prove his innocence at a new

trial. The Fraternal Order of Police (FOP) and Maureen Faulkner are doing everything they can to delay the process even further. This is what happened with last year's King's Bench Appeal and then the new March 17, 2021 legal motion from Faulkner and the FOP trying once again to have DA Krasner removed from the case.

Faulkner and the FOP are purposefully making frivolous legal motions meant to delay the inevitable overturning of Mumia's conviction. Even though the Court rejected the King's Bench Appeal, Faulkner and the FOP were actually very successful because they put Mumia's case on hold for almost one year. They want Mumia to die in prison before he can prove his innocence at a new trial.

### We Challenge CNN's Michael Smerconish & DA Larry Krasner

On April 18, while Mumia was awaiting heart surgery, we formally challenged both DA Krasner and CNN's Michael Smerconish because they are the two most prominent advocates for the legitimacy of Mumia's 1982 conviction. We challenged them to make a public response to the 2010 ballistics test conducted by investigative journalists Linn Washington Jr. and Dave Lindorff, who concluded from their results 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."

Lindorff and Washington's 2010 ballistics test is a centerpiece of our Color of Change petition, where we cite the 2010 test as evidence of misconduct committed by police investigators and the DA's office. We know that Lindorff and Washington's conclusions are irrefutable. We know that Krasner and Smerconish will be unable to disprove the findings. Mumia's conviction

is indefensible and we are calling their bluff. The facts are not on their side. That is why we want Smerconish and Krasner to publicly attempt to defend Mumia's conviction. Furthermore, Smerconish and Krasner must not deflect, must not avoid responding to the 2010 ballistics test. They need to deal with this test before we talk about any other evidence.

Linn Washington and Dave Lindorff have already agreed to be guests on Michael Smerconish's CNN show, if he will invite them on to discuss the 2010 ballistics test. We also urged Smerconish to invite Krasner onto his show to help him attempt to defend Mumia's conviction. After this happens, then Smerconish is free to have as many future shows on Mumia as he likes. He can then attempt to address why Mumia's clothing that he was wearing at the time of the shooting was somehow missing from the evidence, why there is a missing fragment of the fatal bullet, and why prosecutor McGill used 10-11 of 15 peremptory strikes against otherwise qualified black potential jurors.

In another episode, Smerconish can also attempt to explain why, on the Nov. 21, 2020 episode of his show, he cited the disproven "hospital confession" as evidence of Mumia's guilt. I urge everyone to read Dr. Ricardo Alvarez's article in this issue, where he directly confronts DA Krasner for similarly citing the "hospital confession" in his Feb. 3, 2021 brief opposing all of Mumia's appeals.

Until then, please read the excerpt from the Color of Change petition where we summarize the findings of Lindorff and Washington's 2010 ballistics test (published at the top of this page). You will then understand why Smerconish and Krasner have chosen not to accept our challenge.

Ona Move!

Long Live John Africa!

**...Continued from page 11:  
Mumia's Spiritual Advisor**

**Jamal Journal:** *How did you first learn about Mumia's case?*

**Mark Lewis Taylor:** I still remember a rainy day in 1994 when I was just back from a summer of research and connecting with Maya activist groups in Guatemala, struggling then as it long had against European colonization, now against the neocolonialism of U.S.-backed governments in Central America. At the time of that 1994 trip back to the U.S., I was also taking up again some of the prison activist work I had done even earlier in the 1970s when working in the Virginia State Penitentiary investigating prisoner complaints.

So in the midst of all this, on the way into a New York City coffee shop to wait out the rain, I purchased a thin newspaper sold by a grassroots homeless organization – Street News, I think it was. There I read my first column by Mumia. I'm quite sure it was "War on the Poor," which was also recorded by Prison Radio.

Afterwards I began using many of Mumia's writings in graduate-level classes. His writings ignited student thinking on the politics of imprisonment, policing and the death penalty. I resolved that if officials ever signed a death warrant to silence Mumia, "I couldn't live my life as usual" (at least that's what I found myself muttering to myself then).

Why that resolve? I often ask myself that. The answer I give is that by committing forthrightly to the movement to keep alive and release Mumia, I would be involved at the same time on multiple political fronts of liberation. I had already found that to support any one prisoner in the archipelago of U.S. mass incarceration demanded one's utmost. It is to face a kind of abyss of human need.

While I've had to maintain some work for other prisoners too, the work for Mumia was such that by working for him, I felt, I was also working for so many more, and also on the larger fronts of national and international social change and liberation. (I do not accept the current squeamishness of U.S. academic culture making them reluctant to use the word "liberation," even though I believe we should define it and use it carefully.)

Being at work as a full-time professor, in work that itself required far more than 40 hours a week, I needed every hour of my "outside" movement work to count politically in as comprehensive a way as I could imagine. Work for Mumia enabled that. That's what I felt.

So, when Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Ridge signed Mumia's death warrant in 1995, I requested educators' support for Mumia. I learned that many other educators had been using Mumia's writings. And they too found his execution intolerable. My fax machine and

email inbox blew up with responses from colleagues who wanted to go to work.

Thus began years of struggle to find ways to build educators into the larger movement for Mumia headed by International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal. We undertook years of organizing press conferences, newspaper ads and seeking other ways to build educators' contributions into the larger movement.

We immediately took out ads in the Philadelphia Daily News, holding press conferences in Philadelphia. It was a struggle, and we often faltered, got too busy with academic meetings and minutiae, with career advancement and more. But our moments of struggle went forward, and we continue. Our largest ad campaign culminated in a Sunday New York Times full page in the "Week in Review" section in May 2000. So, we were launched.

**JJ:** *Why did you decide to attend the 1995 PCRA hearings in front of Judge Albert Sabo?*

**MLT:** Well, I don't remember any "deciding," really. It was just a necessary stage of the movement work at the time. Besides, there was urgency in the air since Gov. Ridge had given Mumia an execution date. We joined the many who Pam Africa organized to pack the courtroom. I cannot recall who all among educators were present. I'm certain that Cornel West was (more on that below). There were other Philadelphia educators who had stepped forward for our ad campaigns and press conferences, who may also have been there: Achille Mbembe, E. Ann Matter, Ann Farnsworth-Alvear, Farah Jasmine Griffin (all four, then at UPENN), also Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak of Columbia University.

Cornel West, Angela Y. Davis and Manning Marable had already been to the fore of the struggle for Mumia long before me. They supported EMAJ (Educators for Mumia Abu-Jamal) in very helpful ways. Manning Marable once told me, for example, "Always use my name in support of your events." I am not sure if Davis and Marable were at the PCRA hearings or not. Marable at Columbia was a formative teacher for Dr. Johanna Fernández who assumed so many leadership roles in EMAJ and now coordinates the campaign to Bring Mumia Home.

I remember so much about those PCRA hearings: Pam Africa and MOVE organizing the seating in the courtroom and the rallies outside, Mumia coming into the courtroom in shackles and greeting us with raised fist, and Mumia's lawyers drawing the ire of Judge Albert Sabo.

**JJ:** *Given your experience as an observer, what do you think of Kiilu Nyasha's description of Sabo's PCRA courtroom in her 1995 essay, "Witness to a Lynching" published in the original Jamal Journal and then in the first issue of the restarted Jamal Journal?*

**MLT:** I still find Nyasha's write-up

to be accurate, especially in its description of the general ethos of humiliation and intimidation that Judge Sabo stoked and allowed prosecutors to inject into the proceedings. I personally did not see Sabo nod off, but he ran the courtroom indeed as the notorious "hanging judge" who had sent so many other Philadelphians to death row and long prison sentences with the racially biased demeanor that so many of us have long denounced. Even reporters working for established news venues in Philadelphia recognized this bias to be in operation.

Sometimes you wished Sabo would have fallen asleep more. What was so enraging was his continual denial of Mumia's lawyers' motions and his affirmation of the prosecutors' objections. Sabo would also make off-hand remarks about Mumia's plight, almost taunting him with references to the pending execution date.

I remember in one of the earlier hearings, when the antics of Sabo were so egregious, as he made so many off-hand racist comments and ran such a one-sided prosecutors' courtroom. I was sitting beside Dr. Cornel West, then during his first stint at Harvard. At one point after a Sabo comment, Cornel rolled forward in his seat and gasped in loud whisper, "Mississippi 1955!"

Only toward the end of the hearings did Sabo finally relent and issue a stay of execution, precisely because of the large rallies in Philadelphia at the courthouse then and the presence in the courtroom of key dignitaries. On the day of the stay, I think the movement had helped facilitate the presence of Rev. Jesse Jackson in the courtroom among Mumia's many other supporters. The stay came during one of the later hearings of the PCRA in 1995, really only 10 days away from the execution date in August.

**JJ:** *In light of your experience observing Sabo, what is your response to DA Krasner's Feb. 3, 2021, brief where he puts his stamp of approval on literally every single decision Judge Sabo made at both the 1982 trial and the later PCRA hearings?*

**MLT:** Well, Krasner has to know what establishment reporters in Philadelphia know: All of Sabo's courtrooms show at least a potential for racial bias as well as many comments that offer clear evidence of racial bias. Krasner also knows that the bar for tolerating racial bias in courtrooms is set exceedingly low. This "low bar" has been confirmed more than once, in a 1986 case (*Batson v. Kentucky*) and a 2008 case (*Snyder v. Louisiana*).

This means that the smallest amount of racial bias is often grounds for ruling in a defendants' favor. One U.S. circuit court judge, Thomas Ambro of the Third Circuit, thought the low bar should be extended to Mumia, in keeping with the precedent confirmed by the Snyder case just a few weeks earlier. (See Ambro's dissent in *Abu-Jamal v. Horn et al*, p. 78.)

But in the case of Mumia, who is often forced to labor under what Linn Washington has termed "The Mumia Exception," the bar for proving racial bias was set so high that he is denied redress for what he has suffered. Krasner shows no interest in lowering the unfairly raised bar against Mumia. To perpetuate the state's performance of that exception is to fail to be a prosecutor "for the people" of Philadelphia.

Krasner has a tendency to cite "the many other legal cases similar to Mumia's" and the "many other problems and issues" that he wants to address progressively. He and his supporters often speak as if Krasner cannot keep up this "progressive" agenda, that he does need police cooperation to a certain extent to enact his reforms and can't afford to alienate them.

The idea is that if he goes too far in challenging the FOP (Fraternal Order of Police), such as by pursuing litigation favorable to Mumia, the Philadelphia police and other political powers will block his larger agenda for change. It can appear that Krasner is sacrificing Mumia "for the greater good." It is as if there is an unspoken deal with the FOP that Krasner gets to enact some positive reforms, so long as he doesn't do anything that might lead to Mumia's freedom.

I suggest, though, that with this kind of approach, Krasner risks losing even his more modest and comprehensive gains regarding other legal cases and issues. Remember, Mumia and his death remain a comprehensive aim of the FOP. Mumia remains the FOP's "public enemy number one."

If Krasner does not challenge the FOP at their own declared front-most battle line – on Mumia Abu-Jamal – then he really has not challenged the FOP fundamentally. He may achieve some short-term gains for "progressive" prosecuting, and indeed he has, but he has not really challenged the police power of the state that wants to kill Mumia and defeat the revolutionary and more humane form of the state for which Mumia fights.

**JJ:** *Pam Africa has now issued a public challenge to both Michael Smerconish and DA Krasner to try and disprove the conclusions of Dave Lindorff and Linn Washington, Jr.'s 2010 ballistics test. How significant do you think are the conclusions of Lindorff's and Washington's test?*

**MLT:** Very significant indeed. Here are two investigative journalists who know the case inside and out. Neither of them can be dismissed as a naïve advocate who might quickly throw out claims that have no evidence. On the contrary, both have a thorough knowledge of the trial transcripts. Linn Washington has written and researched the case continuously since he visited the crime scene within one hour of the incident. Dave Lindorff has written a detailed, book-length and fair analysis of the entire case. And here, in the video of their 2010 ballistics test, they

**Continued on page 29...**

# Krasner's Stance on Mumia Won't Cost Him Re-Election —But it will stain his reputation as a reformer

By Linn Washington Jr.  
and Dave Lindorff, WHY

March 24, 2021

Philadelphia District Attorney Larry Krasner deserves credit for ending the wrongful incarcerations of nearly 20 people. Krasner did what many of his predecessors did not: fulfill the legal and ethical duty of a district attorney to seek justice. Those wrongful convictions, which resulted largely from misconduct by police and prosecutors, produced decades-long prison sentences, including time on death row.

However, Krasner warrants criticism for his stance to sustain the conviction of Mumia Abu-Jamal, the journalist and activist who was convicted for the Dec. 9, 1981 murder of Philadelphia Police Officer Daniel Faulkner. It's a contentious murder case that's rife with misconduct by police and prosecutors.

Convicted during a highly charged 1982 trial, Abu-Jamal spent 30-years on death row before a federal court in 2011 commuted the sentence to life in prison.

Recently, doctors have diagnosed the

66-year-old with COVID-19, the lung disease that has killed over 500,000 Americans, and congestive heart failure — conditions that compound other debilitating ailments he suffers due to poor medical treatment in prison.

In December 2018, Krasner ironically stumbled upon six boxes of documents that contained startling new evidence of misconduct in Abu-Jamal's case. The boxes — which included evidence that prosecutors failed for decades to give Abu-Jamal's lawyers as required by law — were stashed in a forgotten storage room and uncovered during an inspection tour of the DA's office complex. Withholding such items defines prosecutorial misconduct.

One of the items in those boxes is a handwritten note to the trial prosecutor from a key witness who was requesting the "money" that was promised but never provided. Curiously, Krasner's office sees no improprieties in the apparent prosecutorial misconduct underlying that witness's letter.

The most recent 96-page court filing against Abu-Jamal from Krasner's office does contain over 20-pages devoted to defending other disturbing issues regarding that witness.

For example, Krasner's staff defends that witness' improbable testimony that Abu-Jamal repeatedly fired downward at Faulkner, while standing over him, striking the officer only once. Police crime scene photographs introduced at trial show no bullet marks that should be in the sidewalk around Faulkner's body if that witness's testimony was accurate.

The standard defense of Abu-Jamal's conviction from Philadelphia DAs, including Krasner, is that appellate courts have repeatedly upheld the conviction.

However, missing from that defense is any acknowledgment that courts have repeatedly disregarded their legal precedent to dismiss evidence of misconduct by authorities in Abu-Jamal's case. Those same courts have granted relief in other murder cases where evidence of misconduct was far less egregious than in the Abu-Jamal case.

In February 2020, the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania ordered a highly unusual investigation into Krasner's handling of Abu-Jamal's case, which was demanded by avowed opponents of the incarcerated former journalist. Faulkner's remarried widow, and her Philadelphia police union allies, claimed

Krasner favored Abu-Jamal.

The Supreme Court's appointed investigator — a judge — found no fault by Krasner's office.

Although that court formally rejected the removal of Krasner's office from the case, some members of Pennsylvania's highest court still declared their support for Krasner's removal.

Those declarations — which elevated personal feelings over proven facts — provide another example of the systemic irregularities that fuel international condemnation of Abu-Jamal's conviction. One justice on that court even made detailed suggestions on how to remove Krasner's office and defeat Abu-Jamal's latest appeal, suggestions that sabotage the impartiality required of the judiciary.

In a recent radio interview, Krasner remarked how both sides in Abu-Jamal's case "think I'm 100% unfair to them!"

Krasner's strained stance on misconduct in Abu-Jamal's case may not cost him re-election this year. But it will stain his reputation as a reformer of inequities embedded in the criminal justice system, like those abundant in Abu-Jamal's case.

## How Do We Change DA Krasner's Mind About Mumia's Unjust Conviction?

The Jamal Journal interviews J. Patrick O'Connor, author of the 2008 book "The Framing of Mumia Abu-Jamal"

**Jamal Journal:** *An important development following your book's release was the 2010 ballistics test performed by investigative journalists Linn Washington and Dave Lindorff. What do you think is the significance of the 2010 ballistics test?*

**J Patrick O'Connor:** The prosecution's contention that Mumia stood over a fallen Faulkner and fired four shots at his face, execution style, is absurd. Mumia would have never done something like that, plus he was lying in the gutter with a bullet in his chest when Faulkner was wrestled to the ground and shot in the head by Kenneth Freedman. The tests Linn and Dave had conducted prove that no such shots were fired. The idea that a fallen Faulkner was somehow able to dodge three of the four bullets by jerking his head out of the way of bullets fired

point blank at his face is rank hyperbole. It shows the total disregard for the truth that McGill used to prosecute Mumia.

**JJ:** *How credible did you find Robert Chobert and Cynthia White's trial testimony to be even before this 2010 test was conducted?*

**JPO:** Neither had any credibility; both perjured themselves at trial at the behest of the police and prosecution. Without their testimony, there would have been no eyewitness testimony to hang this crime on Mumia. Their testimony was devastating to Mumia.

**JJ:** *In our Color of Change petition to DA Krasner, we cite the non-response to the 2010 ballistics test from DA Seth Williams (see page 27). What do you think of the DA's response to Lindorff and Washington?*

**JPO:** I am really appalled by it. Seth Williams was a major disappointment as district attorney. I am also confused by it.

**JJ:** *What do you think of DA Krasner's support for Mumia's conviction?*

**JPO:** I was really surprised to learn that Krasner had endorsed Mumia's conviction. Krasner ran on a pledge to use the power of the District Attorney's office to make sweeping changes in the criminal justice system, and he won in a landslide. Over the last four years, he has proven to be one of the most progressive D.A.s in the nation, overturning more than 800 convictions won on the testimony of corrupted police officers. The Conviction Integrity Unit he established has led to 19 exonerations, the most by any such organization in the United States.

Krasner, by almost any measure, has been an effective district attorney and a tremendous upgrade from his recent predecessors. But there is one glaring blind spot that mars his time in office, particularly for a former public defender. Somehow, despite the injustice that the trial of Mumia Abu-Jamal represented, Krasner has chosen to ignore the mountain of evidence that points to the innocence of Mumia in the murder of police officer Daniel Faulkner.

**JJ:** *If you had five minutes alone*

*with DA Krasner, and you wanted to say something constructive that would convince him to rethink his position on Mumia's case, what would you say to him?*

**JPO:** First and foremost, Mumia is innocent. His trial was a monumental miscarriage of justice from start to finish. McGill violated Mumia's constitutional right to a fair trial by purging blacks from his jury, by repeatedly putting on perjured testimony, and by improperly telling the jury during both the guilt and penalty phases of the trial that Mumia would have appeal after appeal. The last thing the district attorney should be doing is defending this conviction in any manner. By defending this conviction, Krasner makes himself complicit in this miscarriage of justice.

I would encourage him to watch the 1996 HBO documentary, *Mumia Abu-Jamal: A Case for Reasonable Doubt*, and to read Amnesty International's pamphlet published in 2000 entitled *The Case of Mumia Abu-Jamal: A Life in the Balance*.

### ...Continued from page 28: Interview with Mumia's Spiritual Advisor

raise serious questions about the veracity of prosecution claims that Mumia stood over Officer Faulkner lying on his back and executed him with a shot to the head with other shots hitting the sidewalk. So Pam's challenge is right-on. Let DA Krasner and media talking head Smerconish respond to the video.

The Lindorff-Washington ballistics test joins other

forms of exculpatory evidence that need revisiting in the form of media attention and more adequate judicial review. Among these forms I would include the following: (a) the argument for racial bias in jury selection that emerged with training-tapes by prosecutor Jack McMahon advising young prosecutors about how and when to keep Blacks off juries, (b) Veronica Jones' 1996 recantation of her being pressured by cops to lie against Mumia at the original 1982 trial and (c) court stenographer's sworn affida-

vit that during the trial she heard the notoriously racist Judge Sabo say out of court in another room, "Yeah, and I'm gonna help them fry the n\*\*\*er." Some of these have been reviewed quickly under judicial review, some totally ignored.

None of these forms of evidence for Mumia will see the light of day, much less receive serious judicial review without public pressure. And that's why Pam's challenge to Krasner and Smerconish on the ballistics test is so significant.

# Talking to co-author, with Mumia Abu-Jamal of 'Murder, Incorporated'

By Ted Kelly, Workers World  
April 9, 2021

Stephen Vittoria co-authored “Murder Incorporated — Perfecting Tyranny: Book Three (Empire, Genocide, and Manifest Destiny),” with Mumia Abu-Jamal. He also is the director of the 2012 documentary, “Mumia: Long Distance Revolutionary.” Workers World conducted this interview in November 2020 prior to the book’s release.

**Workers World:** *When did you first hear about the frame-up of Mumia Abu-Jamal?*

**Stephen Vittoria:** In 1981, I was living and working in Los Angeles and was completely unaware of Mumia’s case. In many ways I feel like I was there and actually lived it, because of all the unofficial research I did in the mid-1990s, and then because of all the heavy duty “official” research I did when making the documentary “Mumia: Long Distance Revolutionary.” Your mind plays games with you, like “I remember watching the TV reports,” or “I remember reading stories in the paper.” In reality, I was a blank slate.

Unsurprisingly, the Philadelphia press and media lived up to — or should I say, stooped down to — levels that would make [the Nazi filmmaker] Leni Riefenstahl blush. When you read the gibberish that was passed off as “reporting” or “journalism,” it’s glaringly inept, blatantly racist and overtly one-sided. Clearly, the press were willing lapdogs for the state and operated as Xerox machines for Ed Rendell, Joseph McGill and the rest of the pathetic and dangerous minions manufacturing Mumia’s guilt, including the hanging judge, Albert Sabo, who must have prayed at the feet of [Chicago 8 judge] Julius Hoffman.

When you read the coverage in historic context now, you can only categorize the Philadelphia press, and later the national press, as nothing more than stenographers and an echo chamber for the state. Like Bob Dylan wrote in the song Hurricane, “Couldn’t help but make me feel ashamed to live in a land where justice is a game.” And not just a game, but an utter and complete fabrication of the so-called facts and events that transpired on Dec. 9, 1981.

**WW:** *How did you get to know Mumia?*

**SV:** My first interaction with Mumia’s work was with the release of his first book, “Live From Death Row.” I remember there was a buzz around the book, because this treatise arrived from the bowels of America’s prison complex and was offering firsthand and personal insight from a prisoner on Death Row.

His journalism offered powerful dispatches from inside America’s prison nation — one existing within the confines of a country that espoused liberty and freedom for all but instead delivered oppressive chains, not only to an

exploding prison population but also to the massive poor and disenfranchised population throughout America.

And all you had to do was read one page, and you instinctively knew that Mumia and the book would not disappoint. I was mesmerized by his ability to take epic themes and historic moments and make them personal, not only for himself and fellow prisoners but more importantly for his reader.

And that’s an important point: Mumia rarely focuses on himself and his case in his books and commentaries. He expands the vision and fights for all people oppressed and in need — whether in prison, on the streets or even in this country. Like Thomas Paine, Mumia is a citizen of the planet.

With everything stacked against our success writing and launching this book, most of all the practical issues inherent when one author is incarcerated on Death Row and the other is roaming around free, it was our camaraderie and singular vision and voice that drove us to the finish line.

**WW:** *“Murder Incorporated Vol. 1” begins with the arrival of colonial forces in North America. What was it like going through U.S. history with Mumia and analyzing how the U.S. became the global imperialist terror that it is today?*

**SV:** Analyzing the myth and reality of U.S. history is like dissecting a master’s magic trick. The sleight of hand or lies are so deep and so entrenched — and so embraced by the American public — that we both felt like we needed to go deep beneath the surface of spin and unearth the ugly reality of murder and mayhem, not to mention plunder and savagery that exist in service to predatory capitalism.

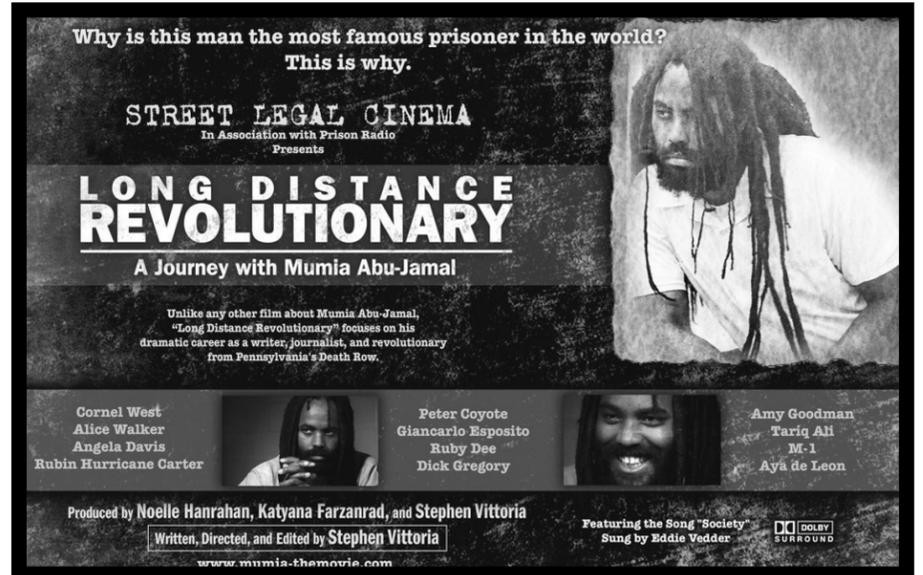
The books operate as a truth serum or lie detector machine unmasking genocide and land-theft, the enslavement of Africans to build the country, the laughable embrace of Providence as the guiding hand of Manifest Destiny — that shining city on a hill and, of course, American Exceptionalism at any and all costs.

It was imperative to both of us to break down the walls of lies and reveal the march of empire for what it really is: grotesque behavior supporting the 1%, to use a more modern characterization. Ultimately, our goal was to offer a diagnosis of a corrupt national pathology.

Ultimately, Mumia and I learned a great deal from each other and our combined and individual research. From the outset, “Murder Incorporated” wasn’t only an exercise in historical writing and critique on our part, it was also a massive learning experience for us as well. It was a classroom of two, and it was the best class I ever attended.

**WW:** *What were some of the limitations you faced collaborating with Mumia while he is in prison?*

**SV:** No doubt the prison walls of-



ferred practical obstacles along the way. Two authors collaborating on a major undertaking never having the chance to work in a room together. Never having the opportunity to celebrate a milestone or creative success together. But we knew the limitations on us from the outset; we knew the ridiculous and nonsensical rules put in place by the Department of Corrections.

During truncated phone calls, letters and occasional face-to-face visits without paperwork, we were able to generalize. But the key player here is Mumia, because manufactured guilt, concrete walls, barbed wire, loaded guns and the corrupt heavy hand of the Commonwealth can’t stop his spirit from rising, can’t stop his keen intellect from critiquing the mendacity of a murderous and racist government.

I don’t have to worry about my cell getting tossed or my writing and research getting stolen or destroyed. I don’t have to worry about the life or health of my family on the outside, not being there when my mother passed away or my daughter or many others, or assisting my legal team in a harder than difficult legal struggle, so that one day I might walk free after being incarcerated for forty goddamn years for a crime I did not commit. I don’t have any of that.

For Mumia it’s hard as hell, and yet he does it with grace, passion, poetry and always with great intelligence. Even after all these years, I stand in awe of my partner.

**WW:** *What are the most important lessons you’d like your readers to take with them after reading “Murder Incorporated?”*

**SV:** Lesson number one: Don’t believe a goddamn thing you read or hear about American history from guild historians, the mainstream press or your uncle at Thanksgiving. It’s all a fairytale wrapped inside a Twinkie — including Thanksgiving. It’s a colossal marketing campaign that doesn’t adhere whatsoever to “truth in advertising.”

Lesson number two: The myth is that America’s prized possessions and greatest exports are democracy and the dream of freedom. The reality, we contend, is that the American Dream is illusory, and that America’s greatest export is, in fact, murder — and along

the way to the kill, it thieves, suppresses and tyrannizes.

Lesson number three: America’s favorite pastime is not baseball but murder — and let’s start calling war what it really is: murder. Not collateral damage or defense or “we got to fight ’em there before we fight ’em here.” War is murder, like the old adage: Kill one person, call it murder. Kill a million, call it foreign policy.

Lesson number four: “Don’t follow leaders; watch the parkin’ meters.”

**WW:** *Tell us a bit about the next volume, Vol. 3, and what readers can expect from this next installment. Will it be the final section? Do you plan on collaborating again?*

**SV:** This volume kicks off with a foreword by Angela Davis, and we’re honored to include her contribution. And in book three, “Perfecting Tyranny,” we continue an epic recounting of the history — and the present reality — of America. Like the purported post-racial America, a myth busted six ways from Sunday, as evidenced by a Dodge Challenger flying a Confederate flag and plowing into a crowd of peaceful protesters.

Or America’s fictitious “war on drugs,” which in its ruthless reality fueled the FBI and CIA’s true-life war on the Black freedom movement, a war that produced the Prison Industrial Complex. Or the Empire’s mass surveillance security state, one in which the citizens are now anesthetized to the entire illegal and depraved out-of-control operation. Or the central myth of America’s founding that the villagers are protected by a free press actively questioning authority rather than manufacturing consent.

So book three, this final invective by your two authors, begs the question: Where do we go from here? Hopefully as a people and a nation, we don’t go from here to eternity.

*--Ted Kelly (she/they) is a member of Workers World Party in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and is co-editor of Tear Down the Walls! at workers.org. Her writing has appeared in the Orinoco Tribune, San Francisco Bay View, Popular Resistance, Socialist Viewpoint, Workers World, and she has contributed to Means Morning News and District Sentinel Radio.*

# “Same Old Devil”: In Time of National Turmoil, Mumia Abu-Jamal and Stephen Vittoria Recall A Nation Devoid of Justice (A Book Review)

By Todd Steven Burroughs

Black Power Media

(www.imixwhatilike.org)

REVIEWED: *Murder, Incorporated Book Three: Perfecting Tyranny*, by Mumia Abu-Jamal and Stephen Vittoria. Foreword by Angela Y. Davis. (published by Prison Radio)

www.murder-incorporated.org

THE ARC OF the radical universe is long, and Abu-Jamal and Vittoria are determined to extend it well into the 21st century by pointing out every aspect of American evil. But they refuse to make it sound like school, so they unapologetically attempt a Joe Cool. The third volume of their group of books on the American empire attempts to historically dissect and ideologically analyze all of the public institutions that make up a nation with the same initials as the old Union of South Africa: the U.S. Supreme Court, the mainstream news media, public campaigns such as the War on Drugs, and the institutional resistance to the people's movements (Native American freedom, suffragists, Civil Rights/Black Power). In doing so, Abu-Jamal and Vittoria summarize their anti-hegemonic lives, leaving it all on the field at the end of Page 385.

The book was officially released the same week the American empire was under siege from its own white male supremacy foundation. Lives were lost and white property was damaged by clashes of agents of white supremacy, egged on by a white supremacist President, a Hela act to do without Klan masks. It's one thing to read the story summary and another to catch the live show. (If there are any CDs of Hamilton left in America, they have surely been put away for good by now.) Trump's naked white nationalism is the proof that this book series, published as Obama multi-racial optimism yielded first to Black Lives Matter marching and later to Trump's torch flames, is relevant in all of its agit-prop glory.

Metaphorically, Abu-Jamal and Vittoria, often trading twelves like a Left radical equivalent of Albert Murray and Ralph Ellison, are two sole residents of a Leftist Gilligan's Island (a snapshot that they might appreciate since this trilogy is filled with 20th-century pop-cult references), frantically waving banners for young people to stop and read. Unlike those perpetually-rerun castaways, they don't want to be rescued; they want to be heard above the din of Disney+ and Instagram. So they curse, they enlarge fonts and they have subheads and title chapters that are part hilarious and always unforgettable. They want to win the battle of context and content, emphasizing both in ways they hope will stick.

So, then, Queen Victoria is described as the world's greatest drug dealer, Martin Luther King is recalled from the Federal Bureau of Investigation lens as “the most dangerous Negro” in the United States, Fox News is referred to as The Cartoon Network and President Trump, “the 45th CEO of the United States,” is renamed “Fuckface von Clownstick.”

But in-between the humor and the name-calling is a Hela amount of America's murderous and oppressive history, rocking back and forth through time like a bad TARDIS trip. On the history of U.S. surveillance:

“Throughout American history, the pendulum has rocked between civil libertarians who embrace the actual language and spirit of the Fourth Amendment regarding the absolute necessity for probable cause along with a legitimate and very specific warrant—and the various government factions who continually attempt to stage-manage the Constitution with aggressive, warrantless surveillance.”

Like the old era of AM Top 40 radio, the hits keep on coming like its contemporary toy, Rock 'Em Sock 'Em Robots: the link they make between the billionaire Bill Gates and his buddy, the convicted sex-offender Jeffrey Epstein alone can raise almost any eyebrows. Whether the topic is Edward Snowden or the complex thoughts of U.S. Supreme Court Chief Judge Roger B. Taney as he took away as much humanity as he could from Native Americans and enslaved Africans, the history is well-researched, the analysis sharp, the language always beautiful and taut. (“Jazz broke out from its southern cradle, lighting then night skies of...”) After 26 years of Abu-Jamal's books, it would be disappointing for any Abu-Jamal work to be otherwise, and he knows that. No matter how brief the Op-Ed or long the book, he has never written for the cheap seats of American intellectual consumption.

The greatest service the authors do is to make sure to emphasize that resistance to the Death Star is possible, profiling several of the activists of the ages, models of humaneness and courage such as Ella Baker and Emma Goldman. Democracy Now!'s Amy Goodman—who, it needs to be pointed out, once upon a time gave up one-third of her affiliates because she stood by Abu-Jamal and his “writes” to be on the air—gets huge shout-outs here for her old work; this book was clearly produced before or while she was in the middle of blotting out all alternatives to the Democratic Party and Joe Biden last year.

IF MUMIA ABU-JAMAL had written only this trio, he'd be a late 20th-century and early 21st-century Leftist legend. But let's roll call over the last 26 years:

*Live From Death Row*

*Death Blossoms: Reflections From a Prisoner of Conscience*

*All Things Censored* (edited by Noelle Hanrahan)

*Faith Of Our Fathers: An Examination Of The Spiritual Life Of African And African-American People*

*We Want Freedom: A Life In The Black Panther Party*

*Jailhouse Lawyers: Prisoners Defending Prisoners V. The U.S.A*

*The Classroom and The Cell: Conversations on Black Life in America* (co-authored by Marc Lamont Hill)

*Writing on the Wall: Selected Prison Writings of Mumia Abu-Jamal* (edited by Johanna Fernandez)

*Have Black Lives Ever Mattered?*

*Murder Incorporated, Vol. 1*

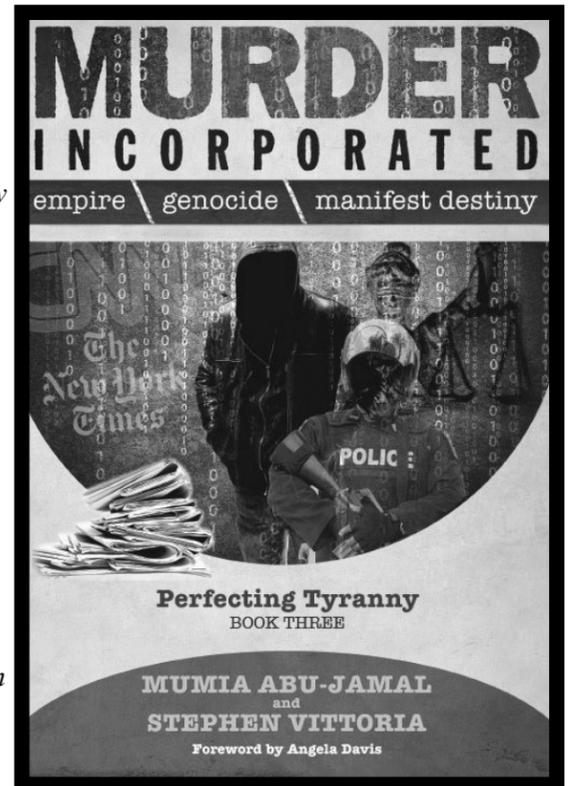
*Murder Incorporated, Vol. 2*

That's five Op-Ed/essay collections, one extended dialogue, two major scholarly works of historical narrative, a pioneering scholarly study of prison life, and now a series of gonzo-infused, Howard Zinn-like history. Twelve by this biographers' count, all from prison, many from Death Row. This does not count the estimated two-score-plus books he has contributed to since 1993 as a foreword or afterword writer or contributing essayist.

To the sad state of Pennsylvania's ever-grinding institutional teeth, Abu-Jamal is still alive and may write even more books, despite recent health challenges that have left him chronically ill. Ever-learning, he's currently is working on his Ph.D. Tho'th willing, more is coming.

How did this happen? It might have something to do with what Che Guevara once wrote: “(T)he true revolutionary is guided by strong feelings of love.” The modern “Free Mumia” movement was born in the Clinton era, when Noelle Hanrahan and Jane Henderson went to Huntington State Prison and recorded an inmate on Pennsylvania's Death Row. They loved what they heard. But they also began to love who they heard. Between the three of them, that love was forged into a revolutionary weapon, for life (which happened to be the inmate's religion).

Abu-Jamal was no stranger to love's invisible strength: he loved his family, then the Philadelphia branch of the Black Panther Party, then the power of Black radio, then the Family Africa. Now he is loved and loves those who still protest in his name and those who speak and write for him, almost 40 years since that first jail door slammed. This book is published by Hanrahan,



who has stood by him and has sacrificed for nearly 30 years to record him in solitary silence. She has done so steadfastly, when his cause was world-popular and when he was yesterday's news. His co-author is his film biographer. Together, they are a trinity of radical commitment, with Abu-Jamal, his life of 67 years come April, and, most importantly, what they represent as its core.

So if 12 books published and translated around the world makes this fallible human being more than a mere legend, what should this man who long overcame his “cop killer” and “convicted-murderer” soundbite-tags be considered as now? Thinking about his role as cyberspace's first political prisoner, with print and broadcast archives scattered all over the World Wide Web, a multi-thousand-word Wikipedia entry, YouTube and social media spaces for some of his estimated 2,000 Op-Eds and many interviews, and at least three documentary feature films, the only word this biographer can come up with after this trilogy, totaling 1,000 decolonized pages, is this one: immortal.

—Todd Steven Burroughs, Ph.D., is an independent researcher and writer based in Newark, N.J. He recently completed a draft of *Talking Drums and Raised Fists: Mumia Abu-Jamal, A Biography of a Voice* and is working on a second Abu-Jamal book, a biographical anthology. He is the author of *Warrior Princess: A People's Biography of Ida B. Wells*, and *Marvel's Black Panther: A Comic Book Biography, From Stan Lee to Ta-Nehisi Coates*, both published by Diasporic Africa Press. His 2014 audiobook, *Son-Shine On Cracked Sidewalks*, deals with the first mayoral election of Ras Baraka, the son of the late activist and writer Amiri Baraka, in Newark.



PHOTO BY THE JAMAL JOURNAL: Pam Africa and Carlitto Rovira on May 19, 2021, at the corner of 125th Street and Old Broadway in West Harlem, where the newly restored Yuri Kochiyama / Malcolm X mural was ceremonially unveiled. "From Harlem With Love: A Mural for Yuri and Malcolm" was originally painted by a neighborhood collective in 2016. (Inside on page 6, view the May 19, 2021 banner painted by Carlitto Rovira declaring "Black and Brown People Demand: Stop Racist Anti-Asian Violence!")