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Bearing witness in the case of Mumia Abu-Jamal

written by The Mumia United Nations Liaison Group
March 10, 2023



Join Bearing Witness in the Case of Mumia Abu-Jamal:

SAT, MARCH 11, 2023 2-4pm ET, 1-3pm CT, 11am-1pm PT

First United Methodist Church of Germantown, Philadelphia



Or Watch the Livestream Here

Featured Speakers:

- **Rev. Judge Wendell Griffen - Retired State Court Trial Judge, Arkansas**
- **Dr. Cornel West -Philosopher and Theologian, Union Theological Seminary**
- **Gabriel Bryant - Philadelphia Based Organizer**
- **Dr. Johanna Fernandez - Historian, Movement Liaison to Abu-Jamal Legal Team**
- **Pedro Polakoff - First Photographer on the Crime Scene, 1981**
- **Dr. Mark Lamont Hill, Professor, Author, Activist**
- **Moderator: Linn Washington Jr. - Professor of Journalism, Temple University**

Evidence of Abu-Jamal's innocence was illegally withheld by prosecutors at his trial and subsequent appeals

Will Judge Lucretia Clemons have the impartiality and independence to make a

decision that reckons with the long history of racism in Philadelphia?

The case of Black journalist Mumia Abu-Jamal, falsely convicted in 1982 of the murder of police officer Daniel Faulkner the year before is now back in court. Newly discovered evidence, previously withheld by prosecutors, a clear violation of law, makes it clear that Abu-Jamal should be freed or given a new trial. Abu-Jamal has endured over 40 years of wrongful imprisonment and almost three decades on death row.

Philadelphia Court of Common Pleas Judge, Lucretia Clemons, is expected to rule by March 16, 2023, on whether newly-found documents pointing to Abu-Jamal's innocence are worthy of an evidentiary hearing where they can be properly reviewed and examined.

The court is reviewing three sets of documents that the prosecution withheld from Abu-Jamal's attorneys for more than 36 years: 1) Handwritten notes by prosecutor Joe McGill that show that he tracked the race of potential jurors during the jury selection process; 2) A handwritten letter by star witness, Robert Chobert, in which he asks prosecutor Joe McGill for money "owed" him, an indication that Chobert's testimony was bribed, and 3) A series of memoranda between prosecutors and officers of the judicial system in and outside of the state of Pennsylvania, indicating that the prosecutor's other main witness, Cynthia White, was also bribed. Just months after her testimony at Abu-Jamal's trial, all of White's pending prostitution charges were suddenly dismissed.

Failure to release Robert Chobert's letter and the series of memoranda between the prosecutor and numerous officers of the court across state lines is a flagrant violation of the 1963 landmark U.S. Supreme Court ruling in the case of *Brady v. Maryland*. Brady established that prosecutors MUST turn over to defense attorneys, all potentially evidence pointing to a defendant's innocence.

Prosecutors in District Attorney Larry Krasner's office who are currently litigating Abu-Jamal's case today are arguing, against all reason, that Robert Chobert's letter demanding money owed to him as well as all the memoranda seeking favorable treatment for Cynthia White are not "materially important" and that, therefore, the *Brady* claim is not merited in Abu-Jamal's case. They argue that Abu-Jamal would have been convicted with or without the testimony of these witnesses.

But the other "evidence" used to convict Abu-Jamal mainly consisted of a made-up confession allegedly heard by police and their claim that Abu-Jamal's gun was found next to him at the scene, but which police failed to test to prove it had been fired. The alleged confession was "remembered" two to three months after the fact by police, among them one who wrote in his report about Abu-Jamal the night of the shooting, "the negro male made no comment." Both claims were made by the very same police officers who beat Abu-Jamal brutally, within an inch of his life, shouting "Kill the Black motherfucker, beat the shit out of the Black motherfucker," and lied on the stand about having properly handled the crime scene, while in fact the police did the opposite.

DA Larry Krasner's office is, thereby upholding the perjured testimonies and theory of the case put forth by the same homicidally violent police officers whose behavior, according to an investigation of the Philadelphia Police by the U.S. Department of Justice in 1979, "shocks the conscience."

The narrative of what happened on the night that Officer Faulkner was killed, promoted by Larry Krasner's office and the racist Fraternal Order of Police (FOP), is false.

In fact, the original prosecutor in the case had to bribe the testimonies of key witnesses, Chobert and White, because they did not see what happened that night, as long-standing evidence shows. The newly discovered evidence is "material" because the original trial court heavily relied on their bribed testimony to convict

Abu-Jamal. If jurors would have known that Chobert and White were, respectively, paid and relieved of prison time in exchange for their testimonies, the jury would have doubted the prosecutor's theory of the case. And the fact that this new evidence of bribery was withheld for almost four decades by Philadelphia prosecutors requires throwing Abu-Jamal's conviction out, or at the very least, holding an evidentiary hearing.

Our event brings together eminent scholars, experts, and activists who will bear witness to constitutional violations in a case that is emblematic of how the prosecutor's office operates and disfigures the lives of Black people, their families, and communities in Philadelphia. Participants include Cornel West, who will testify to the cruel and inhumane nature of death row's solitary confinement and death by incarceration; recently retired Arkansas state judge, Rev. Wendell Griffin, who will address *Brady*; professor and social critic, Dr. Marc Lamont Hill; Abu-Jamal's friend and defense team liaison, Dr. Johanna Fernandez; and photographer Pedro Polakoff whose photos, among other things, document the absence of cab driver Robert Chobert from the crime scene.

The evidence that justice was not done in Mumia's case and that federal law was violated is overwhelming. Will Judge Clemons of the CCP listen to it and do the right thing?

