

PRISON RADIO

Devastating cross examination

Dateline: 12-23-2015 Scranton PA Federal Court

Day Two of "Abu-Jamal v. Kerestes" had fireworks equal to the opening round on Friday. The arguments for a Preliminary Injunction continued before the U.S. District Court in Scranton Pennsylvania. [\(here Mumia's interview after Friday's hearing\)](#)

It was a day of dueling doctors, admissions, explosive documents, and first hand testimony, which debated the constitutional right to health care while in prison. The question: does Mumia Abu-Jamal receive life saving new anti viral drugs that cure Hepatitis C? or will Judge Robert Mariani's federal court allow the Department of Corrections in Pennsylvania to deny any treatment for chronic Hepatitis C - and maintain (a just revealed protocol) that calls for "denying care" and "monitoring inmates" while the virus ravages the body causing irreversible organ damage.

The morning featured vigorous cross examination. Dr. Joseph Harris, deftly handled Department of Corrections cross, emphasizing this key point: the cure for Hep C is clearly the medical standard of care. And denial of treatment is no treatment for a progressive and infectious disease.

In a last minute addition to the witness list the DOC questioned dermatologist Dr. Schleicher who first treated Mumia's devastating skin condition in Feb. of 2015. The Department of Corrections through this expert unconvincingly asserted that Mumia's skin condition was unrelated to Hepatitis C, and that his low platelet counts, anemia of chronic disease, abnormal liver function tests, are not caused by Hep C.

At 12:10 of the hearing a withering cross exam by Robert Boyle (Attorney for Abu-Jamal) exposed Schleicher's limited diagnostic acumen, his failure to monitor Mumia's two hospital ICU admissions and the illuminating fact that he did not follow up on Geisinger Medical Center's recommendation in May for an Hep C viral load test. He got him to admit that "he did not know much about Hep C". Schleicher has continued to treat Mumia, and it was revealed was unaware that the infectious disease specialist hired by the department of Corrections, Dr. Ramon Gadea, had recommended on September 9th treatment for Hepatitis C in response to Mumia's ongoing ravaged skin. Notably, Dr. Gadea and the onsite doctors at SCI Mahanoy who see Mumia in the infirmary on a weekly basis were not called to testify. It can be presumed that their testimony would have been unfavorable to the DOC.

Standing Up for Mumia

The mid afternoon featured Dr. Suzanne Ross and Dr. Johanna Fernandez. The value of these two frequent and long term visitors to Mumia was in the compelling details that they provided describing Mumia's injuries, acute symptoms, and deteriorating health. Some examples from the acute period of symptoms in the spring and summer included Mumia's slurred words, elephant skin, scales and bloody cracks

in his skin on 90% of his body, extreme weakness, swelling of his limbs, and loss of mental acuity. When cross-examined both Ross and Fernandez were unapologetic, as they expounded on Mumia's innocence, unjust incarceration, and the state's naked attempts to silence him.

As those who know Mumia personally realize, the man just does not complain, and is frankly unable to describe his own vulnerability. As such, this testimony was key. Present through video streaming throughout the proceedings Mumia was, as Dr. Fernandez testified is part of his character, simply stoic. Before this devastating health crisis, there were only a handful of occasions that he has gone to sick call during 34 yrs of incarceration. This might be surprising for a man who is known to the world as a writer and eloquent public commentator.

Key Evidence Exposed

In an explosive revelation: Bret Grote of the Abolitionist Law Center, dissected the testimony of DOC defense witness infirmary administrator, Mr. Steinhart - revealing that there is a written Hep C treatment protocol that was developed this year. Grote appealed to the judge, and he required that the DOC immediately produce a copy of the document. Laura Neal, DOC counsel quickly tried to suppress the public release of the document, calling for it to remain under seal. Overheard in the courtroom, DOC associate defense counsel noted that they did not want this document available publically because it would increase the department's liability in the class action pending for inmate Hep C treatment. Debate continues Wed morning on whether this document will be sealed. A Right To Know request by Prison Radio requesting the document was filed with the state during break requested by the judge so he could read the protocol

On tap: Cross Examination of DOC expert- Dr. Jay Cowan, notoriously head of Riker's Island Medical Center. please follow us on twitter, facebook, and tonight on email for updates...

The doctors and lawyers that enforce the PA Department of Corrections policy have got a problem. Health Care is a constitutional right, even for those who are incarcerated. Proving that the DOC has been "deliberately indifferent" the required standard for a preliminary injunction and relief in this case clearly has been met by Abu-Jamal's attorneys.

Please make a contribution to defend Mumia's right to treatment!

www.bit.ly/curehimnow

Luchando por la justicia y la libertad,

Noelle Hanrahan

Director