

ANNOUNCING THE RELEASE OF BOOK THREE

—Perfecting Tyranny—

MURDER INCORPORATED

empire \ genocide \ manifest destiny

~ a three book series ~

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact(s):	Noelle Hanrahan	Stephen Vittoria
Phone:	415.706.5222	-----
Email:	info@prisonradio.org	stephen.vittoria@gmail.com
Website:	http://murder-incorporated.org	
Publisher:	Prison Radio, San Francisco	
Distributor:	Chicago Review Press/Small Press United	
ISBN:	978-1-7346489-0-4 [hardcover] 978-1-7346489-1-1 [softcover]	

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SERIES OVERVIEW

Written by political prisoner, Mumia Abu-Jamal, and filmmaker, Stephen Vittoria, *Murder Incorporated: Empire, Genocide, and Manifest Destiny* (a three-book series) is a searing critique of the American Empire, a diagnosis of a corrupt pathology. The myth is that America's prized possessions and greatest exports are democracy and the dream of freedom. The reality, say Abu-Jamal and Vittoria, is that the American dream is illusory, and America's greatest export is murder—and that along the way to the kill, it thieves, suppresses, and tyrannizes.

Murder Incorporated strives to set the record straight: to educate, to enlighten and enliven the people against the corruptions of empire—corruptions that stretch from Columbus's first steps on Hispaniola through yesterday's murderous drone attack. More than a history book, *Murder Incorporated* is a lively, irreverent, and spirited alternative to the orthodoxy of American exceptionalism.

Book Three: Perfecting Tyranny (new release)

(Release December 2020 – Foreword by Angela Davis)

If a belief in divine destiny and racial superiority fueled the origins of the American Empire, as detailed in *Book One: Dreaming of Empire*; and if those beliefs were hardened in the crucibles of expansionist war and expansionist capitalism into the myth of American exceptionalism and the grim meat-hook reality of the world's first global superpower, as described in *Book Two: America's Favorite Pastime*; then it should come as no surprise that this Empire would manufacture mechanisms to sustain and maintain itself—its wealth, its power, and its myths.

In *Book Three: Perfecting Tyranny*, Abu-Jamal and Vittoria continue their epic recounting of the history—and present reality—of America. This volume challenges the acceptance of some of the most heralded features of American superiority—a free press, an independent judiciary, individual liberty, equal rights for women and minorities—and shows how these are often myths bent to the will of the Empire.

As with the previous two volumes, the authors recount not only the onslaught of the American Empire, but the fearless persistence of a resistant American People who refuse to acquiesce. Although this concludes *Murder Incorporated* the trilogy, the Corporation—and the resistance against it—carries on.

From the Prison Radio Publisher's Note:

Murder Incorporated exposes all the dirty, vulgar, shameful actions of the United States—hundreds of pages of the state's blunt secrets revealed, exposing the continuous and deadly hypocrisy of the empire. This historic collaboration between Stephen Vittoria and Mumia Abu-Jamal stands amid the pantheon of social dissent against tyranny and despotism. Its hope and optimism stand as testimony to the unstoppable resilience of the human spirit.

Book One: Dreaming of Empire

(Release April 2018 – Foreword by Chris Hedges)

Readers experience the American origins of empire—born in the blood, tears, and sorrows of genocide, slavery, and mass death. Much of Book One is a vast panorama of how imperial America came to be, and how it grew into the Leviathan that later emerged.

Book Two: America's Favorite Pastime

(Release April 2019 – Foreword by S. Brian Willson, Afterword by David Swanson)

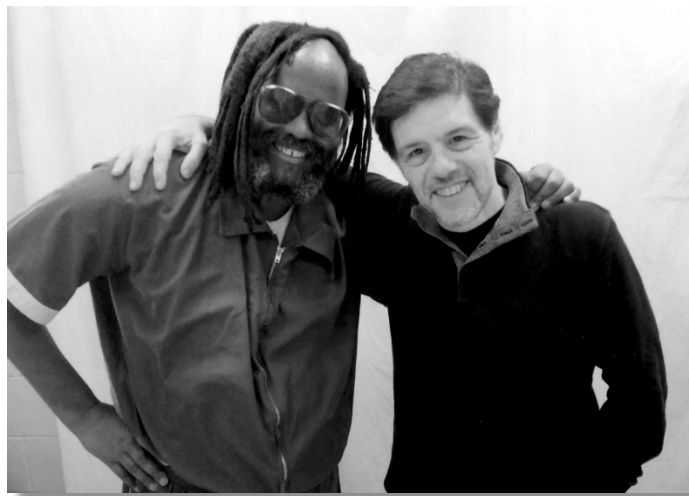
The seeds of exceptionalism and divine entitlement, whose planting is detailed in *Book One: Dreaming of Empire*, yield *Book Two: America's Favorite Pastime* and the nightmarish side of the American Century. This tome is a damning account of war—and the selling of war in America—revealing how riches, imperial expansion, and the consolidation of power have been the true aim of American wars and covert actions, both at home and abroad.

AUTHORS' BIOGRAPHIES

The sweeping historical polemic, *Murder Incorporated: Empire, Genocide, and Manifest Destiny*, marks a maturation and evolution of its two authors. Mumia Abu-Jamal has long been among the world's most famous political prisoners. His critiques of the U.S. justice system, prison system, and political system have been embraced by an international following. From the time he was a 15-year old writer for the national Black Panther Party's newspaper, to his years as an award-winning radio reporter in Philadelphia, to his many more years publishing books and broadcasting commentaries from Death Row, Abu-Jamal has been committed to shining a light into the darkness of injustice. This book—his twelfth—marks a historic pinnacle for Abu-Jamal as a writer and critic of the American Empire.

This seminal publishing moment was made possible by his meeting, collaboration, and eventual friendship with filmmaker-cum-author Stephen Vittoria. After producing and directing feature films and developing scripts in Hollywood, Vittoria transitioned to documentary filmmaking with the award-winning *One Bright Shining Moment: The Forgotten Summer of George McGovern*, an impassioned portrait and vigorous defense of McGovern's 1972 presidential campaign. Vittoria then began filming a new project, "Murder Incorporated," this one tackling the long and violent history of the American Empire, which led him to working with Abu-Jamal—and the realization that the project was too expansive for a film. This detour offered Vittoria the path to make *Mumia: Long Distance Revolutionary*, the only project of its kind to examine the life and work of Abu-Jamal separate from the concerns and controversy of his case.

From the beginning it was clear that Vittoria and Abu-Jamal possessed a deep affinity and commitment to telling the hard and oft-ignored truths about the American reality. This bold, forthright and unapologetic book marks the evolution of two men committed to justice and radical change, compelled to inform and inspire, and driven to condemn the unpunished crimes of the American Empire.



FOREWORD/AFTERWORD BIOGRAPHIES

BOOK ONE

Foreword by Chris Hedges

Chris Hedges is a Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist, Presbyterian minister, and visiting Princeton University lecturer. Hedges has reported from more than fifty countries and has worked for *The Christian Science Monitor*, *NPR*, *Dallas Morning Herald*, and *The New York Times*, where he was a foreign correspondent for fifteen years. He is the author of 14 books including *American Fascists*, *Empire of Illusion*, and *War is a Force That Gives Us Meaning*.

BOOK TWO

Foreword by S. Brian Willson

Born on the Fourth of July, S. Brian Willson is a Vietnam veteran (Captain, USAF), peace activist, and attorney. In 1987, while engaged in a protest against the shipping of U.S. weapons to Central America, Willson and others blocked the railroad tracks at the Concord, California Naval Weapons Station where an approaching train did not stop and struck the protesting veterans. Willson lost both his legs and suffered a severe skull fracture. Shortly thereafter, Willson discovered that he had been identified for more than a year as an FBI domestic “terrorist” suspect by the Reagan administration and that the train crew that day had been advised not to stop the train. Willson has been a lifelong advocate for human rights and a defiant force against U.S. imperialism and America’s murderous wars.

Afterword by David Swanson

David Swanson is an antiwar activist and author. Swanson co-founded War is a Crime.org (formerly After Downing Street). Swanson has authored numerous books including *War is a Lie*. Swanson has been nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize numerous times.

BOOK THREE (new release)

Foreword by Angela Davis

Angela Y. Davis is known internationally for her ongoing work to combat all forms of oppression in the U.S. and abroad. Over the years she has been active as a student, teacher, writer, scholar, and activist/organizer. She is a living witness to the historical struggles of the contemporary era.

During the last twenty-five years, Professor Davis has lectured in all of the fifty United States, as well as in Africa, Europe, the Caribbean, and the former Soviet Union. Her articles and essays have appeared in numerous journals and anthologies, and she is the author of nine books. She is Distinguished Professor Emerita in the History of Consciousness and Feminist Studies Departments at the University of California, Santa Cruz.



ENDORSEMENTS

This book sings with a warning shriek to wake the walking brain-dead—with tons of *oh-shit!* revelations. The book's construction is insanely original, like nothing you've ever read, devoid of Lefty cant. It's excruciating—as the authors simply let America embarrass itself. Wow. Read it.

—**Greg Palast**

*Investigative Reporter & Author of the New York Times bestseller,
The Best Democracy Money Can Buy*

This is an angry book. The anger is unsparing, incisive and often eloquent. The recasting of rampant American power as that of a world Mafioso is long overdue, and Mumia Abu-Jamal and Stephen Vittoria speak for so many with this bracing counterattack. Read and mark what they say; it is urgent.

—**John Pilger**

Award-Winning Journalist & Filmmaker

This book pulls no punches. It is a must-read for all who seek the unvarnished, albeit painful, truth about the history of the United States.

—**Marjorie Cohn**

*Professor Emerita, Thomas Jefferson School of Law
Author, "Cowboy Republic: Six Ways the Bush Gang Has Defied the Law"*

Like the most powerful critics in our society—Herman Melville to Eugene O'Neill—Mumia Abu-Jamal and Stephen Vittoria force us to grapple with the most fundamental question facing this country: what does it profit a nation to conquer the whole world and lose its soul?

—**Cornel West**

*Author, Public Intellectual, Professor at Harvard University,
Professor Emeritus at Princeton University*

Murder Incorporated is a searing, *must-read* for anyone wanting to know the roots, guts, and machinery of the American Empire Project from its very beginning. I cannot recommend it highly enough.

—**Dahr Jamail**

Journalist & Author of "Beyond the Green Zone: Dispatches from an Unembedded Journalist in Occupied Iraq"

Mumia Abu-Jamal and Stephen Vittoria have crafted a bold and fierce analysis of US Empire. With rising levels of white supremacy and presidential bombast, there is no better time than now to read a book such as this.

—**Sonali Kolhatkar**

Journalist, Author, Host of "Rising Up with Sonali"

(continued)

Authors Abu-Jamal and Vittoria surgically excise the layers of mythology designed to obscure the horrors of racism, sexism and classism in which our country is so deeply rooted.

—**Jewelle Gomez**

Author & Activist

A powerful and profoundly illuminating analysis of the myth and the reality of American history, a story of expansion through murder. Well-written and persuasively argued. I strongly recommend it.

—**Dr. James H. Cone**

Bill & Judith Moyers Distinguished Professor

Union Theological Seminary

Mumia and Stephen have mastered the art of communicating clearly and in depth the essence of the American Decadent Empire. *Murder Incorporated* tells the truth and nothing but the truth.

—**Emory Douglas**

Political and Social Justice Artist

Poetic, biting, fiery, accessible, and utterly undeniable, *Murder Incorporated* roots this nation in its true history of empire, revealing the Dorian Gray portrait America has worked so hard to hide away. Reading this book and its framework is literally a matter of life or death.

—**Walidah Imarisha**

Author, educator, activist, poet



PUBLISHER'S INTRODUCTORY NOTE

The Power of Truth is Final¹

Conventional wisdom would have us believe that it is insane to resist this, the mightiest of empires, but what history really shows is that today's empire is tomorrow's ashes; that nothing lasts forever, and that to not resist is to acquiesce in your own oppression. The greatest form of sanity that anyone can exercise is to resist that force that is trying to repress, oppress, and fight down the human spirit.

—Mumia Abu-Jamal

As we witness everyday, the brave truth-tellers of the current age are ridiculed, scorned, and marginalized as “raving lunatics.” Some are eliminated. When the Empire is questioned or undressed, the noise machine beholden to the elite cries “conspiracy theorist... traitor... apostate”—all of which quickly smears and deprecates this newly crowned “public enemy,” one who is unafraid to speak the unspeakable truth.

—Stephen Vittoria

Mumia Abu-Jamal once famously opined, “The state would rather give me an Uzi than a microphone.”² More than five decades of intense surveillance, harassment, confinement, repression, and torture levelled against him by Frank Rizzo's Philadelphia Police Department, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections, have graphically illustrated the truth of those words. The United States government is terrified of what Mumia has to say. And with good reason. See, there is a reason slaves were never supposed to learn to read or write. A reason prisoners are best kept muted, retained hidden behind walls, unheeded. People like us are not supposed to tell these troublesome truths. The truth, Ramona Africa reminds us, is always dangerous to those pushing the lie.³

Mumia tells the truth. He has always told the truth, and he does it again here, writing alongside Stephen Vittoria in this third and final installment of their magnum opus *Murder Incorporated*. These three books—*Dreaming of Empire*, *America's Favorite Pastime*, and *Perfecting Tyranny*—deconstruct and lay bare the United States experiment in imperialism. Written by a captive rebel living under the hostile eye of the state, this historical trilogy exposes the continuous and deadly hypocrisy of empire. *Murder Incorporated* builds on the work of Howard Zinn's manifesto *A People's History of the United States*. This work aims to expand the telling of the story of the United States from the front-line perspective of those dispossessed and discarded by the treachery of U.S. imperialist expansion.

It is important to recognize and respect the conditions under which this opus was written. Unlike other twenty-first century scholars, Mumia writes, researches, and publishes having no contact to

¹ John Africa, *The Power of Truth is Final*; <https://onamove.com/john-africa/>

² Mumia Abu-Jamal and Noelle Hanrahan, *All Things Censored*, Seven Stories, New York, 2001, p. 21.

³ Ramona Africa, personal interview conducted by Noelle Hanrahan and Jennifer Beach, in Philadelphia, PA. (July 16th, 1992).

a university library and no access to the Internet. He has never surfed the world wide web and has no quick access to books, essays, journal articles, or interview subjects. He is only permitted to have seven books in his cell at a time; any more than that are considered contraband. In researching *Murder Incorporated*, Mumia had to constantly cull his stash of written material, absorbing all he could from each book before getting rid of it to make space for a new one. As has been his process since he first started publishing from prison, he took precise, careful, and scrupulously detailed notes of every book and article he read, along with page numbers and citation information. He wrote as small as possible, to fit as much material as he could into his limited number of notebooks.

At what other time and place has a history of this scope—a thoroughly detailed overview of a nation’s crimes of colonization from its inception to the present day—been crafted under such draconian measures? When has such a record of the crimes of a state been created by one of the state’s own victims, with every word penned under the state’s pretense of control? Consider the barriers placed in the way of Abu-Jamal’s and Vittoria’s intellectual collaboration. Mumia’s access to visitation is strictly limited, and he can only speak on the telephone for fifteen minutes at a time, once a day. Just one fifteen-minute call, *if* he can get the guard to put in a slip for it. He is permitted two visits a week, to which he cannot bring even a pencil or piece of paper. He endures a full-body cavity strip search before and after every visit. For nearly a decade he was denied visits and phone calls. For two decades, and the first nine of his books, he wrote everything by hand with the mere cartridge of a ballpoint pen. All visits are supervised, all phone calls recorded and surveilled, and all his mail is read by prison staff. Letters, books, or papers deemed “inappropriate” by the mailroom censors are discarded before they reach him.

In order to build the intellectual partnership that created *Murder Incorporated*, Vittoria and Abu-Jamal had to overcome the state’s exhaustive efforts to limit Mumia’s contact with the outside world. These are some of the constraints under which *Murder Incorporated* was researched and written. Abu-Jamal and Vittoria’s success is a testimony to their will, determination, and bond as writing partners.

The book you hold in your hands today is an act of protest and dissent. Its very existence defies the repression of the state. So does its content. While *Murder Incorporated* can and should be used in the polished hallways of academia, it is deeply rooted in the proud tradition of American protest literature. Vittoria and Abu-Jamal seek to advance the interests of the exploited, evicted, imprisoned, and marginalized working class people by telling a history that does not flinch from the truth. In this project, *Murder Incorporated* positions itself alongside Eduardo Galeano’s *Open Veins of Latin America*, Vincent Harding’s *There is a River*, and Robert Fisk’s *The Great War for Civilisation* by embracing the historic imperative of truth telling. Like those great works, *Murder Incorporated* makes an intergenerationally significant contribution to the bank of historical political thought and social movement theory.

It is no accident that *Murder Incorporated* was co-written by a man in prison, a man who has spent the lion’s share of his life on death row. Scholar Joy James suggests that prisons function as political and intellectual sites that are largely hidden from our mainstream discourse.⁴ Those

⁴ Joy James, *Imprisoned Intellectuals: America's Political Prisoners Write on Life, Liberation, and Rebellion* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003).

warehoused within write with “unique and controversial insights into idealism, warfare, and social justice.”⁵ Thus, the prisoner, who is denied access to any of the privileges and protections afforded to citizens of the state, who is subjected instead to indignity and deprivations, is uniquely empowered to criticize the state. Moreover, because the prison writer typically has no access to editors or publishers, and writes with no expectation of receiving remuneration from their writing, they are able to write what they know to be true. Their words are uncompromised. In this regard the prisoner is free in a way that no one else is free.

Mumia has nothing to lose from telling the truth. The state has already done everything in its power to silence him. There are no remaining threats that can be leveled against him. There is no tactic of abuse or control left in the state’s arsenal that it not already been inflicted on him. He has withstood beatings, torture, and near-fatal gunshot wounds. From the time he was fourteen years old, working as a young organizer for the Black Panther Party, he had already earned security index status from J. Edgar Hoover’s FBI.⁶ He spent his teen years and early twenties under unyielding police surveillance and harassment. Since his arrest and framing in 1981, he has weathered forty years of incarceration—separated from friends, family, and community. Twenty-eight of those years he spent in solitary confinement with a pending execution. He survived two death warrants, each of which gave him thirty days to live. He survived a life-threatening battle with complications from Hepatitis C, dragging himself back from the brink of death after the prison’s vicious and deliberate medical neglect sent him into a coma. He won court battles to overturn laws written and passed by the Pennsylvania legislature with the express specific purpose of forbidding him from publishing his writing.⁷ Censorship was discussed at the federal level, on the Senate floor.⁸ None of it has stopped him. He is perhaps the world’s most prolific imprisoned radical.

Perfecting Tyranny is his twelfth published book, and he has authored thousands of radio commentaries. Within a month after being shot and arrested in 1981, he was writing essays⁹ from Holmesburg Prison. When warrants were issued for his death in 1995 and 1999 while he sat awaiting execution, Mumia *still* continued to write. Recovering from near death in the prison infirmary in 2015, Mumia continued to write. And why not? The state has already made up its mind to kill him. He is alive because he, and the movement behind him, have fought the state at every turn, sometimes winning extraordinary victories—like the overturning of his death sentence—and sometimes grinding into a bitter stalemate, but never giving up ground. The state has not *refrained* from killing Mumia: it has *failed* to kill Mumia. What possible incentive could he have to flinch from the truth?

⁵ James, *Imprisoned Intellectuals*, 4.

⁶ Amnesty International, “United States of America, A Life in the Balance: The Case of Mumia Abu-Jamal” (February 2000),

<https://www.amnesty.org/download/Documents/136000/amr510012000en.pdf>

⁷ Abu-Jamal v. Kane, 96 F. Supp. 3d 447 (M.D. Pa. 2015).

⁸ Vol. 140, Cong. Rec. 61 (Tuesday, May 17, 1994) Senator Robert Dole, U.S. Senate <https://www.prisonradio.org/media/audio/mumia/senator-robert-dole-diversity-airwaves-re-npr-242>; & Vol. 141 Cong. Rec. S8080 Daily ed. June 9, 1995 (Statement of Senator Robert Dole).

⁹ Mumia Abu-Jamal, “Christmas in a Cage” *Survival Is Still a Crime* (Friends and Family of Mumia Abu-Jamal Press, 1986)

Given the forces arrayed against Mumia, it may appear as a miracle that this book—or any of Mumia’s eleven previous books—was published at all. It was no miracle. It was the hard work of a movement. Mumia’s relentless courage and resilience, and Stephen Vittoria’s triumphant accompaniment, created an intellectual bond that would not be denied. This, combined with the dedication and unswerving solidarity of hundreds of thousands of activists and artists and lawyers across the country and the globe, have *forced* this book through the bars of the prison into printing presses and into bookstores. This book is a reminder of our individual and collective power.

The great Howard Zinn once remarked that to be hopeful in catastrophic times is not naive. Rather, it reflects an understanding that history is as much about courage and sacrifice as it is about cruelty.¹⁰ Abu-Jamal and Vittoria teach us the same lesson. Mumia Abu-Jamal, relegated to a carceral underworld, has funneled his harrowing experience of captivity into an extraordinary act of truth-telling that benefits our common survival. Stephen Vittoria imparts his searing analysis, poignant honesty, and tremendous tenacity to craft this labor of courage and love and get it past the censors so that this vital work could be in our hands.

Mumia cautions us to remember that “What history really shows us is that today’s empire is tomorrow’s ashes, that nothing lasts forever.” It is humbling to be taught this lesson from one of our nation’s most famous political prisoners, who is also a scholar, a revolutionary, and an educator. A gift to us, and a labor of love, this final book in the remarkable trilogy *Murder Incorporated* is the result of unwavering and courageous commitment. It elevates our human spirits and encourages us to have full faith in our ability to change the world.

Again we recall the wisdom of Ramona Africa: the truth is dangerous to those whose power depends on the lie. This book is dangerous. This is why slaves were never taught to write. This is what happens when prisoners contribute to the bank of political thought. Empires hold their power through the silence of their victims; by breaking that silence, Mumia deals a devastating blow to the empire that cages him. *Murder Incorporated* exposes all the dirty, vulgar, shameful actions of the United States—hundreds of pages of the state’s blunt secrets revealed, exposing the continuous and deadly hypocrisy of the empire. This historic collaboration between Stephen Vittoria and Mumia Abu-Jamal stands amid the pantheon of social dissent against tyranny and despotism. Its hope and optimism stand as testimony to the unstoppable resilience of the human spirit.

Jennifer Black and Miranda Hanrahan, June 2020
Prison Radio
Pennsylvania & San Francisco

¹⁰ Howard Zinn, 2004, “The Optimism of Uncertainty,” *The Nation*, September 20, 2004, <https://www.thenation.com/article/archive/optimism-uncertainty>.