

President Obama: Before the Empire Falls, Free Leonard Peltier and Mumia Abu-Jamal!

By [Priti Gulati Cox](#)

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Man, I dream of just being able to paint. Go to sleep when I want, get up when I want, eat when I want. Try to enjoy what's left for me. Talk to the little children—be an elder for my people. —Leonard Peltier, United States Penitentiary, Coleman I in Florida, [July 4](#), 2016.

This is not a good time to be black in America, and not just because of people walking while black, driving while black, running while black, breathing while black, but because of all the hells that people suffer all across America. The truth of the matter is, it ain't gettin' sweeter. It ain't getting better. —Mumia Abu-Jamal, [October 07](#), 2016, SCI Mahanoy state prison, Frackville, Pennsylvania.

Leonard Peltier and Mumia Abu-Jamal have been unjustly imprisoned for decades, and their last chances for freedom will come in the six weeks between the November 8 election and the inauguration of the next president on January 20. During that interval, President Barack Obama will himself be totally free. With no political pressures to worry about, he can do something that should have been done long ago: liberate these two men.

In June 1975, during a confrontation on the Pine Ridge Reservation, Oglala, South Dakota that involved members of the American Indian Movement (AIM), two FBI agents were shot dead. In 1977, Leonard Peltier, an Anishinabe-Lakota American Indian, grandfather, painter, writer, and a member of the AIM was convicted and sentenced to two consecutive terms of life imprisonment for their murders. This, [despite the fact](#) that there was zero proof that he did it, and ample proof that the authorities manufactured evidence against him.

Radio journalist, writer, and former Black Panther Party member Mumia Abu-Jamal was [convicted](#) and sentenced to death in July 1982 for the murder of Philadelphia police officer Daniel Faulkner. The incident took place on December 9, 1981, and he has maintained his innocence since. He has spent most of the ensuing 34 years in solitary confinement on Pennsylvania's Death Row. In 2001, a federal judge ordered that his death sentence be overturned, and after losing many appeals of that order, on December 7, 2011, Philadelphia District Attorney made the announcement that he was giving up on restoring Mumia's death sentence. He is now commuted to life imprisonment without parole.

Both Peltier and Mumia have health problems. Among other ailments, Peltier suffers from diabetes, high blood pressure, prostate issues and a heart condition. An affiliate of Physicians for Human Rights has said, "[Peltier risks](#) blindness, kidney failure, stroke and premature death, given his inadequate diet, living conditions and health care." In late 2015, he was diagnosed with an abdominal aortic aneurysm that requires surgery, which is being denied him. If the aneurysm decides to rupture, he will die within minutes.

In late August this year, a federal judge denied a request from Mumia for life-saving medication that could cure his hepatitis C. Mumia's lawyers refiled a case against the Hepatitis C Care Committee and against the DOC officials. This denial remains in effect despite having been declared unconstitutional. Mumia [has said](#) that the protocol constitutes "deliberate indifference to the medical needs of at least 6,000 people in Pennsylvania prisons."

As soon as I arrived in the Indies, on the first Island which I found, I took some of the natives by force in order that they might learn and might give me information of whatever there is in these parts.

—words of Christopher Columbus taken from Howard Zinn's A Peoples History of the United States.

Since that fateful day in October, 1492, when the discovered glistening gold ornaments on the ears of the Arawak Indians lit up the colonist's eyes, many, many people of color in these, the robbed-again United States of America, have been systematically annihilated, afflicted with diseased blankets, enslaved, lynched, whipped, raped, dispossessed, imprisoned, deported, shot by the police, dehumanized, you name it. All this to keep the white elite extractive mechanism going, and going, [and going](#), until one day, no doubt, it will be all gone.

Leonard Peltier and Mumia Abu-Jamal are just the latest in a long line of victims of a cultural genocide and a black oppression agenda that goes back 500 years, with no signs of stopping.

All of the riches and finite resources in far off places like Iraq, and right here in this occupied land of gold, "bed, bath and beyond" have yet to be sucked dry. Meanwhile, today, the [battle](#) in Mosul rages on; in [this country](#), one in three black men, and one in six Latino men can expect to be incarcerated in their lifetime.

Having spent 41 years and 34 years behind bars simply for resisting empire, Peltier and Mumia are perhaps our last living link between the dark past and equally dark future. Their stories, their geography, their art, their words, their ailing bodies, their eyes, today, serve as an atlas of the genocidal and racist white settler history of this country.

How can America heal from this? By acknowledging the wrong that has been done to Peltier and Mumia and setting them free would be a start. Or is the government too afraid to disturb the sleeping giant of deception and atrocities on which this country was founded, fearing the long reparations list that might unfurl all the way to the moon? If that's the case, then it's business-as-usual, as always, before one day when it will all come tumbling down with its own weight.

Meanwhile, here's a window into Peltier's thoughts.....

Like so many Native children, I was ripped away from my family at the age of 9 or so and taken away to get the "Indian" out of me at a boarding school. At that time, Native Peoples were not able to speak our own languages for fear of being beaten or worse. Our men's long hair, which is an important part of our spiritual life, was forcibly cut off in an effort to shame us. Our traditional names were replaced by new European-American names. These efforts to force our

assimilation continue today. Not long ago, I remember, a Menominee girl was punished and banned from playing on the school's basketball team because she taught a classmate how to say "hello" and "I love you" in her Native language. We hear stories all the time about athletes and graduates who face opposition to wearing their hair long or having a feather in their cap.

I'm 71 years old [and still](#) in a maximum security penitentiary. At my age, I'm not sure I have much time left....when I was indicted the average time served on a life sentence before being given parole was 7 years. So that means I've served nearly 6 life sentences and I should have been released on parole a very long time ago. Then there's mandatory release after serving 30 years. I'm 10 years past that. The government isn't supposed to change the laws to keep you in prison — EXCEPT if you're Leonard Peltier, it seems. Now, I'm told I'll be kept at USP Coleman I until 2017 when they'll decide if I can go to a medium security facility — or NOT.

As the last [remaining](#) months of President Obama's term pass by, my anxiety increases. I believe that this president is my last hope for freedom, and I will surely die here if I am not released by January 20, 2017.

....and into Mumia's thoughts:

It is a tragedy that we're now counting down the days of the first African American—accent on African—president in the history of the United States. And when he leaves you will still have the greatest incarcerator [the United States] on earth at work, and growing and continuing to divest and destroy and diminish the lives of millions of people. The fact that you could have a black president and not put a dent in that hellhole is startling.

[Obama] went into a prison that was empty. Because all of the prisoners were emptied from the cells. So, he walked into a prison block. Yes, that's true, and it's historic [Obama is the first sitting president to walk into a prison block]. But it's also true that he walked in an empty prison block. If you have the greatest incarceration on earth in this nation, then, you know, why don't you make history by creating empty cells? By freeing people.

It's been fifty unbelievable years, since Huey and Bobby typed out the ten-point program and platform of the Black Panther Party for self defense. How many times in the last fifty years have you reread the ten-point program and marveled at how grim the conditions still facing millions of black people remain. Half a century, and black life still don't matter.

You have to admit against your better judgement, perhaps. But it's damn good entertainment [on the current electoral debacle], and it's unbelievable. I mean this is the ultimate reality show. It's so real, it's unreal. I think it reflects clearer than anything we could have imagined—the fall of empire. This is how democracies fall. History repeats itself. First time it's tragedy. Second time it's farce. So, it's interesting. It's entertaining. It's unbelievable. Yet, here we are."

Yes. Here we are. Everything has been white-washed, including America's first black president. Behold the irony, for he holds the pen that the white man has thrust in his hand after deeming him worthy of the White House. The question is, does Obama have the courage to finally grant Peltier and Mumia clemency, not only because he can but because it's right?

(I understand that it's not in president Obama's hands to pardon Mumia Abu-Jamal since he

is a state prisoner. But, it is incumbent upon president Obama to at least try and urge Governor Tom Wolf of Pennsylvania to pardon him.)

Yes You Can, President Obama, Yes You Can!

Please visit [WholsLeonardPeltier.Info](#) to learn more about Leonard Peltier, and [here](#) to look at his art. Please visit [FreeMumia.com](#) to learn more about Mumia Abu-Jamal, and to [PRISON RADIO](#) to listen to Mumia's broadcast from prison.

Priti Gulati Cox is an interdisciplinary artist, and a local coordinator for the peace and justice organization CODEPINK. She lives in Salina, Kansas, and can be reached at p.g@cox.net. Please click [here](#) to see more of her work.

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