

A F T E R W O R D

I'll always remember the day I received the first box of books at my home. I ran my hands over the cover and marveled at the bold white letters of the title. My heart was racing and I had difficulty containing my exuberance. For Michael and me, the greatest satisfaction in writing this book came from finally being able to tell the story of the ordeal my family and friends and I have lived through over the past quarter-century. Now that story had finally been documented in black and white. I could hardly believe it.

I remember Michael calling me on the phone as we both shared the excitement of seeing the tangible result of two years of work. He told me that I would soon be receiving the book tour itinerary, and asked that I not be intimidated by what I was going to see. Boy, was he right! Writing the book had been a daunting task, and the schedule laid out for the next three weeks was equally unnerving. The only way I could describe it was by comparing all parties involved to a group of musicians, each with their own ideas, getting together to orchestrate a song. There were so many details to arrange in a very short time, and it became more intense as we made our preparations. It was several weeks before Christmas and I had a million personal things to get done, and not nearly enough time to do them. On top of the usual holiday crunch, Michael and I had to coordinate our schedules and make travel arrangements for the tour, as well as find time to talk with the publisher, the fact checkers, the publicists, and the media.

The tour itself was an exhilarating and exhausting whirlwind. It was also one of the most rewarding experiences of my life. We met so many wonderful people from all walks of life, including all the police personnel and their families who came out in legions to provide security, and also, to support us. For the past twenty-six years, I have considered the police community part of my family.

During the book tour we did dozens of book signings and innumerable interviews for radio and television. One of the most memorable was our

first television interview with Matt Lauer on the *Today* show. The night before I flew to New York, I had been up until 3:00 a.m., packing, trying to get things ready for Christmas, and taking care of last-minute details, yet I still found it nearly impossible to sleep in my hotel room that night. My wake-up call came at 4:00 a.m. I was still on West Coast time, and had only been able to muster about five fitful hours of sleep over the past forty-eight hours. Now I had to go on national TV and do an interview that several friends had advised against because of Matt Lauer's liberal tendencies. I got myself together and headed down to the hotel lobby where my publicist, Justin Loeber, was waiting for me with a much-needed cup of coffee.

We arrived at the NBC studio early enough for me to have my hair and makeup done. When Michael arrived a short time later, we were escorted to the stage and asked to sit on the couch. We sat there quietly for a few moments, and then Michael said, "OK, Maureen, he's going to ask you about this and that—you know how to handle those questions, no problem. It's the same old stuff. Just be ready for a question about the nude pictures." I couldn't believe what I'd just heard. I was stunned. NBC News had pictures of me with no clothes on? How in the world did they get them? I began to panic, running through my mind all the parties I had been to, all the trips to the Caribbean in my youth that I had taken with friends. Had I ever taken my clothes off in public? More important, had anyone taken pictures of me if I did! I didn't think so, but soon, *Matt Lauer was going to ask me about them on national TV!*

These panicked thoughts swirled through my head for what seemed like several minutes (even though in reality, it was only a few seconds). I looked at Michael and whispered, "Michael . . . they have nude pictures?" He looked at me with a puzzled look on his face for a brief moment, cracked a huge smile, and said, "Maureen, they have the *new* pictures, not nude pictures!"

I had forgotten all about the fact that a month before the book's release, in a lame attempt to steal our thunder, Jamal's attorneys had held a press conference at which they'd presented a new set of pictures taken at the murder scene. They had been taken sometime on the morning of December 9, 1981, by a German cameraman who had been working in Philly at the time. The pictures were shot after Danny and Jamal had been taken to

the hospital. Among other things, one picture showed Danny's hat first on the ground, and then, in another picture, on top of his patrol car.

At one point the photographer had offered to sell the pictures to an associate of mine, but I didn't want them. So, after the case had become so sensationalized, the enterprising photographer sold them to Jamal's supporters, who had sent copies of the pictures to NBC and Matt Lauer. Now Lauer was going to ask me what I thought about them. These pictures were the newest in a very long line of canards thrown up more or less every year by Jamal to keep the supporters rallying and the money flowing. Despite the allegations by Jamal's attorneys that these new photos confirmed police had staged the crime scene, I realized they were meaningless, and that's what we told Mr. Lauer.

Overall, the interview went pretty much as expected, with two notable exceptions.

Unbeknownst to us, a contingent of Mumia's supporters had gathered in the plaza area outside the NBC studio. You can see this area over the shoulders of Matt Lauer and his guests as you watch the show most mornings. Well, much to my delight, someone from the *Today* show decided it would be effective to send a live camera crew out to film these folks up close, and to let them voice their feelings. Like most of Jamal's supporters, the group outside the studio looked like an unwashed, mindless mob of social misfits and malcontents. The people who came out to support Jamal that morning helped us promote the book beyond our wildest dreams by giving millions of Americans who had never seen a pro-Mumia rally before a live shot of what I've been fighting against for twenty-six years.

Matt Lauer was relatively fair and civil in his questioning of me. To appear balanced, he made a few comments that inferred there might be some merit to the claims of innocence and courtroom misconduct made by Jamal's supporters. Why he would do that while discussing a book about my struggles is unclear to me, but he did, and that's fine. However, he did say something to Michael that was an absolute cheap shot.

Out of nowhere, Lauer told Michael that he had spoken to Robert Bryan, the latest in a long line of attorneys who have represented Mumia Abu-Jamal over the decades. Lauer stated, "Mr. Bryan, Mumia Abu-Jamal's attorney, feels you have been making a career off of Jamal's case for years,

and that it didn't surprise him you would cash in with this book." Then Lauer asked Michael what he thought about that. Cool as ever, Michael hit back by staring Lauer down and saying, "As he often is, Mr. Bryan is uninformed. Long ago I made it known that, like Maureen, I too am donating every penny I make from this book to charity." Lauer had no follow-up questions on the topic. I've been told that NBC received hundreds of calls from angry viewers, calling Matt Lauer a cheap-shot artist and demanding an apology, but none was ever forthcoming. In the end, I think we took the high road while Lauer and NBC News rolled in the mud.

Several days later, after I'd had a chance to catch up on my sleep, a thought came to me: How in the world did Michael know that Matt Lauer was going to ask me about the new pictures? I would find out a few days later at the Justice for Daniel Faulkner Scholarship luncheon at the spectacularly beautiful Philadelphia Union League building. Michael was the master of ceremonies, and as he shared the story about the "nude pictures" with the audience, he added a fact that I hadn't heard before. It seems that while Michael and I were sitting on the couch waiting for the interview to start, Michael had noticed a pad of paper open in plain view on the coffee table in front of us. He glanced down and realized that the pad contained a list of all the questions Matt Lauer was going to ask. As Michael put it, "Hey—I'm a Philly guy. I'm not going to pass up an opportunity like that! I had to look." And he did. That's how Michael knew, in advance, all the questions that would be asked that morning, including the cheap shot that was intended to catch him off guard and embarrass him on national TV.

During the tour we did all of the radio and television spots in the mornings and afternoons; then, we typically did signings at two different stores in the evenings. While traveling from New York to my first book signing in New Jersey, I happened to look down at my hands. When I realized that my nails were hardly presentable, I asked the limousine driver to please stop at a drugstore so I could pick up a bottle of nail polish. As I sat in the parking lot with the limo's back door open for air, I proceeded to paint my nails just minutes before my first book signing. What a great limo driver; he never complained about the fumes!

I was overwhelmed by the number of people who came to our book signings. The lines stretched so long, we were often there for hours, yet

people waited patiently to meet us and have us sign their books. So many people remembered the day Danny was murdered, and even what they were doing when they heard the news. This was very moving for me, especially since it happened so many years ago. Michael and I often had to choke back our own tears as we listened to heartfelt stories from some of the people about how they had lost their own loved ones to murder. Looking into their eyes, I was touched that they'd had the courage to come up and share their own tragic experiences with us. Many people gave us personal notes or special items, like rosary beads, to offer encouragement and support. At one point after Paul was on the radio and mentioned how cold he was on the East Coast, a supporter at one signing brought a set of long johns for both Paul and me. Did they ever come in handy!

Michael and I made a great team. He was able to articulate the feelings and emotions I had experienced for so many years, and because he had taken the time to read more than five thousand pages of court transcripts, he could field any technical question that was thrown at him, and often stepped in to clarify some of my answers. Despite the whirlwind nature of our book tour, we still found plenty of opportunities to laugh. An incident comes to mind in which Michael called me on my cell phone and asked, "Maureen, I'm sitting in front of Borders; where are *you*?" My reply: "I'm sitting in front of Borders, too. Where are you?" Of course he was at the correct location and I wasn't. He said to me, "Maureen, you're scaring me . . ." I'm sure that wasn't the only time. (My friends say that I've never been the most organized person in the world, but they love my free spirit.)

On the twenty-sixth anniversary of Danny's death we did a book signing at Gino's Steaks. We chose this location because Joey and Eileen Vento have been staunch supporters of Danny's legacy for many years, as well as good friends to Michael and me. Joey is a dynamo with a strong sense of right and wrong. He has kept a picture of Danny on his wall for years, and has bricks in front of his steakhouse inscribed with the names of all the police officers and firemen who have lost their lives in the line of duty in the City of Philadelphia since 1900. Joey threw a block party on Sunday, June 4, 2000. It was a huge success, and Joey donated the daily gross proceeds of \$60,000 from his restaurant to the Justice for Daniel Faulkner nonprofit organization. He has continued to be very generous

to our educational fund, which helps the children of murder victims continue their education.

On the last day of our book tour, I unexpectedly bumped into John Patrick Cardinal Foley—a former priest from Philadelphia who currently resides in Rome—in the hallway of the hotel at which I was staying. He was kind enough to give me a blessing, which was very meaningful, especially since my Catholic faith has helped to sustain me since Danny’s murder. His blessing provided me with a comforting feeling of spiritual fulfillment and healing.

Life After the Tour

The book tour that spanned the first three weeks of December 2007 was the zenith of my struggle for justice. As I had in 1998, when we posted the ad in *The New York Times* and put the Web site online, I felt as if we had struck a blow against Jamal and his supporters. For three nearly sleepless weeks and dozens of radio and TV interviews, Michael and I had sustained ourselves with adrenaline and the goodwill of the people who had come out to meet us at the book signings.

A few days before Christmas, I had to go home—back to my life as a regular person. I spent the holidays with my family and friends, but continued to do local radio and TV interviews for the first several months of 2008. I used my remaining energy to reply to the hundreds of e-mails I received each day, doing my best to respond to all the people who had so generously written to Michael and me.

At this time I was still waiting to hear the decision of the three-judge panel of the Third Circuit Court of Appeals which had reviewed the arguments to Judge Yohn’s 2001 decision, in which he affirmed Jamal’s guilt, but overturned his death sentence on a ridiculous technicality. This hearing had taken place on May 17, 2007. I discussed this hearing in the final chapter of the original release of this book.

As I reflect back on this hearing, I find it quite revealing that over the past twenty-six years Mumia Abu-Jamal has always handpicked his attorneys, and yet he’s never found one that he likes. This is particularly strik-

ing in light of the fact that he has garnered large amounts of money over the years for his defense. Over the past few decades, he's fought with, publicly belittled, and unceremoniously fired nearly a dozen attorneys. Each has been accused of legal ineptitude and/or of selling out and colluding with the State to help them execute him.

During this May 17, 2007 hearing, Robert Bryan was his newest attorney. We knew nothing about him other than what we had seen in print and heard on the radio. Robert Bryan, the man who had accused Michael Smerconish of "cashing in on the Jamal case," looked like a mustached and slightly disheveled college professor. He spoke softly, with a mild southern drawl. Bryan took to the podium and made his opening statement, explaining why Mumia Abu-Jamal should be given a new trial. The judges began asking him questions in a very calm and civil tone. To a layperson, Bryan appeared somewhat unprepared. The judges turned up their questioning to the point where Bryan became flustered; his answers seemed to undermine his own arguments.

Next to the podium was Christina Swarns from the NAACP. She looked very professional and well put together. Her opening statement was questioned by all three judges. Ms. Swarns's reasons for a new trial were rooted in the base argument that Judge Sabo and assistant DA Joe McGill were both racists who had subtly worked together during jury selection to exclude blacks from the jury, simply because they were black. I couldn't help but look at Joe McGill as these disgusting and patently false accusations of racism were made. He sat motionless, staring straight ahead, externally unaffected—but I knew that on the inside, Joe was tied up in knots. Who wouldn't be? I knew he would have given anything to be allowed the chance to calmly walk up to the Prosecution's podium and verbally tear the heart out of this woman who so freely and openly accused him of such vile acts.

Throughout the hearing none of the three judges ever seemed to tip their hands as they asked their questions. We all walked out of the courtroom with no inkling of how the vote might go, or how long it might take for the judges to make their decision. As had happened so many times before, we were forced to wait for months before the three-judge panel rendered their decision. In his attempt to prepare me for whatever decision

might be handed down from the courts, Hugh Burns, an assistant DA for the prosecution who has worked on this case for many years, warned me that, historically, the Third Circuit almost always sides with the defendant in a capital case. He also wanted to be sure I understood that even though it had been twenty-six years since Jamal had been sentenced, and even though the past decisions had gone our way, this would be the biggest hurdle we would have to clear to date, and that *anything* could happen in the Third Circuit Court. Anything!

The decision finally came on March 27, 2008. The panel had voted two to one to affirm circuit court judge William Yohn's 2001 decision. This meant that the death sentence was still overturned because of an absurd technicality involving the wording on a standard form used by the jury, but that all the other arguments for a new trial made by Abu-Jamal and the NAACP had been rejected. It also meant that unless the U.S. Supreme Court decided to accept the case, Lynne Abraham, the current district attorney of Philadelphia, would have to decide if there would be a new sentencing hearing for Mumia Abu-Jamal, more than twenty-six years after his conviction. At this time, I released the following statement to the Associated Press:

Today, after over a quarter of a century of waiting, my family and I can finally say that Mumia Abu-Jamal is officially a "murderer." No longer can Jamal's minions pronounce that he was wrongly convicted or that his trial was unfair in any way. While Jamal's life may be spared due to a legal technicality—the wording on a standardized jury form—all of his arguments about judicial bias, prosecutorial misconduct, and police malfeasance have been rejected as lies and nonsense by the second-highest and most-impartial courts in the land. In the end they have ruled that Mumia Abu-Jamal is a common killer who is GUILTY of murdering my husband.

While we still hope to someday see Mumia Abu-Jamal executed for the heinous and cowardly crime he committed, we are heartened by the fact that the decision made today by the Third Circuit Court brings my family and me one giant step closer to the end of this painful twenty-six-year journey to see justice done for Danny. There will undoubtedly be more appeals and more ridiculous claims made by Jamal and his band of attorneys, but we are committed to staying the course until the justice system finally closes the book on Mumia Abu-Jamal, and we are finally afforded the closure promised to us by a jury twenty-six years ago.

On June 27, 2008, Mumia Abu-Jamal asked the Third Circuit Court to have the full fifteen-judge court review the decision made by the three-judge panel. This is called *en banc*, and it is Jamal's right to ask for such a hearing. In essence, the *en banc* hearing would give him another swing at the plate to get a new trial. On July 22, 2008, the re-argument of the case was denied, and my family and I breathed another sigh of relief.

As I write this, we are now at a point where, short of a pardon by the governor or the president, the only remaining avenue of escape for Mumia Abu-Jamal—and the only way for us to have his death sentence reinstated—is an appeal to the Supreme Court of the United States. The U.S. Supreme Court receives thousands of requests for review each year. Of those, they agree to hear arguments on a very select few. The likelihood that they would choose to hear arguments in this case may be enhanced by its notoriety, but the sheer statistical likelihood is minimal.

Should the U.S. Supreme Court decline to hear further arguments, once again, Lynne Abraham would be faced with the decision of whether or not to hold a new sentencing hearing. If she chooses to do so, there would be little at risk, other than the extreme cost to the city and the potential for damage to property and violence by Jamal's supporters. Mumia Abu-Jamal would be presumed guilty by the new jury, and the worst thing that could happen is that he would be sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole. Some of the new jury members might not have even been born when Danny was killed. As many of the original witnesses that could be found would likely be called to come back and recount things they'd seen over a quarter century earlier, and the written testimony of those witnesses who have died would have to be read to the jury. Jury members would never see the actual person who, at great risk to themselves, had provided the compelling testimony.

If Lynne Abraham declines to conduct a new sentencing hearing, the theory is that Mumia Abu-Jamal will be removed from death row and placed in the general population of one of Pennsylvania's maximum-security prisons for the rest of his natural life. I say "in theory" because I have no doubts that Mumia Abu-Jamal, his attorneys, and his friends will relentlessly work to have him freed, even if it's many years from now, and just in time for him to die outside of prison. In fact, there are many groups and

prominent individuals today that actively lobby to abolish not only the death penalty in the U.S., but also the sentence of “life without the possibility of parole” (also known as LWOP). They believe that imprisoning a person until they die—even someone who has violently and wantonly taken the life of another—is inhumane. In reality, unless Mumia Abu-Jamal is executed there will be no closure and no finality to this nightmarish ordeal for the Faulkner family and me.

The often-hidden but ongoing tragedy in every murder case is the profound impact the killer’s act has on the victim’s family. In addition to the void left in their lives, the frequent loneliness and the darkness they endure, survivors are tormented by endless appeals defined by years of sleepless, anxiety-ridden nights and the constant grinding fear that their loved one’s killer will be freed someday because of an obtuse technicality or the unwarranted sympathy of a misguided judge.

Over the years I have reflected back on the lives of my nieces and nephews. They were young children at the time of Danny’s murder. The heartache that their parents had to endure throughout the trials and appeals was tremendous and it took an emotional toll on the children. They watched their parents suffer from the murder itself and then over and over again as the trials and protests in support of Mumia continued. These children experienced a sadness that young children should not have to endure. This was the experience of the Faulkner children, yet how many times over is this reality repeated with other families, with other children? There have been so many studies about the rehabilitation of inmates or the cost to incarcerate a death row inmate on an annual basis. But people, especially those who oppose the death penalty, rarely think of the price the survivors pay for the turmoil inflicted upon them due to the violent act of another person and the torment they endure by having that killer be kept alive.

In January 2009 I sit, twenty-seven years after the murder of my police officer husband, still waiting for justice. So many of Danny’s and my family and friends have died waiting to see justice in this case: It’s heartbreaking to think of how many other victims or survivors wait years and years for some sort of closure so they can return to a normal life. No matter what the future holds for my family and me in the courtroom, we will always be there for Danny—to be the voice of the voiceless. And though I might ultimately

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be denied the justice that was granted to me by a jury of twelve people back in 1982, until I draw my last breath, I will always lend my voice in support of both the victims and the survivors of murder, and to argue against any efforts to deny them the justice and closure that should come with the death penalty.