

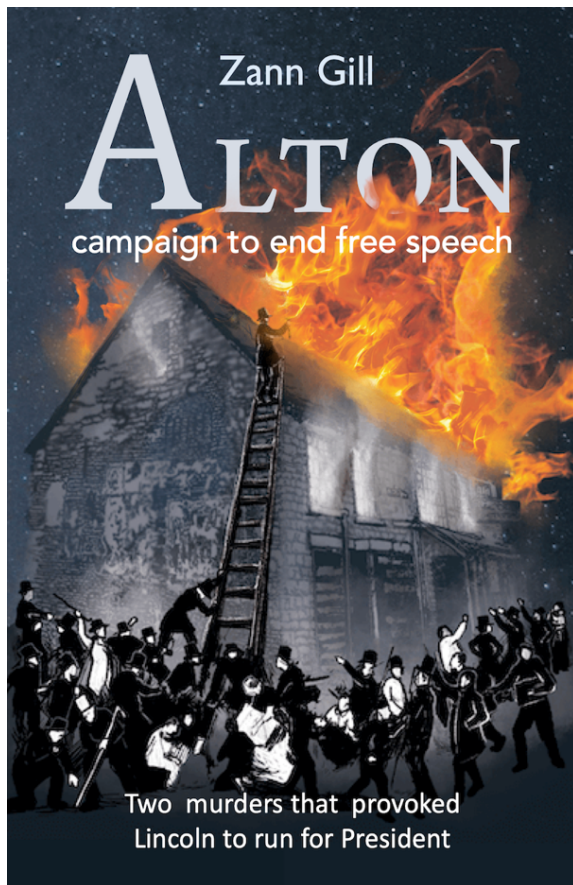
Press Release – November 28, 2022

Book Release – January 27, 2023,
On the 185th Anniversary of the First
Major Speech of Abraham Lincoln



ALTON: campaign to end free speech

Two murders that provoked Lincoln to run for president
by [Zann Gill](#)



Congressman Jamie Raskin highlighted ALTON's timeliness when he [compared the January 6, 2021 Attack on the Capitol to the Alton mob riot of 1837](#). The “threat from within” that Abraham Lincoln warned of in his first great speech of January 27, 1838, which launched his trajectory toward the Senate and Presidency twenty years later is seen now in the surge in mass murders and hate crimes.

ALTON revolves around the crucifixion of an innocent black man, [Francis McIntosh](#), in St. Louis, MO (1836), followed by the murder of a white man [Elijah Parish Lovejoy](#) (1837) who spoke out for McIntosh, demanding a fair trial. ALTON is based on the Harvard PhD thesis and biography of Elijah Parish Lovejoy by [John Glanville Gill](#), memoirs of escaped slaves [William Wells Brown](#), [Henry Bibb](#), and [Solomon Northrup](#), and a screenplay for a feature film [ALTON](#). The brutal murder of Francis McIntosh, and its dismissal in court, transformed Lovejoy from a moderate into an abolitionist.

In the 1830s, slaves escaped from Missouri, a slave state, risking their lives to ford the Mississippi River to Alton, Illinois, a free state, where they thought they would be free. A Missouri slave owner paid off an Illinois lawyer to pressure local residents to return his escaped slaves, manipulate the media, contrive a business downturn in Alton, and blame economic recession on all those who wanted to abolish slavery.

The villain in ALTON, a paid pro-slavery lobbyist, handed [Elijah Parish Lovejoy](#), Editor of *The Alton Observer*, a devil's ultimatum: “Sacrifice your values. Give up your commitment to free speech. Abandon your newspaper and leave Alton. Or stay. . . and you'll be murdered.” When

Lovejoy refused to sacrifice his values, a frenzied mob of white men feigned respectability by dressing up in top hats and swallow tail coats to murder him. This murder in Illinois, Abraham Lincoln's home state, awakened the nation to the evil of slavery.

The book ALTON has sparked a "making media actionable" project led by five invited authors, who have contributed chapters.



Lisa Maydwell, Mobolaji Olambiwonnu, Zann Gill, Dr. Marty Casey, Scott Cooper, Dr. Joseph Okpaku

[Lisa Maydwell](#), award-winning writer and film director in Atlanta, in her Chapter in ALTON describes how the first African American President of the International Boxing Federation refused a bribe offered if he would compromise his values. [Mobolaji Olambiwonnu](#), winner of a Tribeca Audience Award 2021 for his film *Ferguson Rises*, wrote a foreword for ALTON about harnessing media for social change. [Dr. Marty Casey](#), winner of a Presidential Lifetime Achievement Award 2021, founded The UnGUN Institute following the murder of Michael Brown Jr. in 2014 to process individual and collective trauma from violent racist acts and is [Chair of Black Son Day August 9th](#) which drew 50,000 in previous years (both in person and online). [Scott Cooper](#), Director of [It's Our Story](#), a project of the Victor Pineda Foundation, winner of a Best of Berkeley 2022 Award, describes collecting the stories of talented disabled leaders, inspired by Steven Spielberg's [Shoah Foundation](#), which collects the stories of Holocaust survivors. [Dr. Joseph Okpaku](#) writes about making media actionable.

After following a conventional path, earning a graduate degree at Harvard, working as a Research Scientist at NASA, and later founding [earthDECKS](#), ALTON's author Zann Gill was struck by an epiphany: powerful stories are the keys to unlock change agency. ALTON is part of a network of cross-sectoral equity projects to address disability, race, gender, and other forms of discrimination. It is timely now to empower everyone to address US election rigging, media manipulation, police brutality, and equal opportunity today.

Review copies are available by request. For information or review copies please contact: Alex Young-Davis <books@metavu.net>

[ALTON Launch](#) – Free ALTON pre-publication eBooks will be offered via QR code to book talk attendees until launch, January 27, 2023.



[ALTON – References](#)
[ALTON – Book Talk & Podcast Topics](#)

[Zann Gill, Author](#)
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