

SYSTEMS OF PERMITTED VIOLENCE

— VOLUME I —

Murder Without Madness
A Study of Violent Permission

J.L.B-S.

1ST EDITION



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*“Fear preserves authority because it rests on the dread of punishment, which never fails. And anything in this work that proves unfit under pressure will be punished first by me.
I am not afraid of the future. I am building it.”*

— From *The Architecture of Human Will*
12.26.25

Foreword

Governance is internal sovereignty. It is what has been called free will since antiquity, stripped of metaphor and sentiment. Not the feeling of choice and not the narrative of agency, but the operational capacity to initiate, inhibit, sequence, and sustain action in accordance with internally held judgment. When people speak of losing free will under pressure, they are not describing a collapse of values, belief, or desire. They are describing a loss of continuous governance, the erosion of internal sovereignty under sustained load.

Most accounts of human breakdown mislocate this failure. They treat emotion, meaning, morality, or motivation as primary causes. Those are late interpretations applied after systems have already crossed limits they were never designed to survive indefinitely. What fails first is not conscience or character. What fails first is the capacity to bind judgment to action across time. Governance degrades before belief changes, before values fracture, before identity destabilizes.

This distinction matters because judgment can remain fully intact while sovereignty degrades. A system can know what ought to be done, endorse it without ambivalence, and still fail to execute reliably. Philosophy has historically labeled this weakness of will or *akrasia*, treating it as a moral or rational defect. That framing misidentifies the point of failure. The problem is not judgment. It is the capacity to enforce judgment continuously when regulatory margin is exhausted.

Internal sovereignty is not absolute. It is finite, costly, and dependent on reserve. Like any governing capacity, it degrades under sustained demand. When demands persist beyond recovery, sovereignty does not vanish. It becomes intermittent. Authority flickers. Execution decouples from intention. Behavior may remain orderly. Values may remain coherent. Decisions may remain clear. Yet action fails to hold. This flicker is not confusion, weakness, or loss of will. It is the lawful behavior of a finite system operating beyond the margin it can continuously enforce.

Modern explanations tend to interpret this state as personal failure, emotional dysregulation, or moral lapse. That tendency is structurally wrong. It mistakes late-arriving symptoms for primary causes and assigns responsibility where capacity has already thinned. This work does not correct feelings, redeem meaning, or restore comfort. It describes what occurs when finite regulatory systems are treated as if they were infinite, and the predictable architectures that emerge when continuous enforcement is no longer possible.

Nothing here requires belief or agreement. The only prerequisite is acceptance of finitude. Once that condition is met, everything that follows is unavoidable.

Cross-Era Scientific Convergence

The claims advanced in this chapter are not new. They recur wherever observers attend to persistence rather than motive or moral evaluation.

In early political analysis, endurance is treated as a function of allowance rather than sentiment. In *The Prince* and the *Discourses*, Niccolò Machiavelli distinguishes violence that destabilizes rule from violence that endures. Continuation is tied to whether action remains permitted within the structure of governance. Where allowance is withdrawn, disorder follows. Where it remains in force, action persists despite cost.¹

Military theory later formalized the same constraint. In *On War*, Carl von Clausewitz separates friction from collapse. Friction increases cost and degrades execution without dissolving command. War continues under strain so long as authority holds. When authority fails, continuation ends.²

Modern physiology describes the same pattern in regulatory terms. In his work on allostasis and allostatic load, Bruce McEwen shows that biological systems continue producing regulated output while internal cost accumulates and recovery capacity contracts. Continuity under load is not treated as health. It indicates that regulation remains operative.³

Systems and control theory reach the same conclusion through formal models. In *Cybernetics*, Norbert Wiener demonstrates that systems maintain output through feedback as noise and inefficiency increase. Degradation precedes failure. Failure is abrupt. Persistence signals intact regulation.⁴

These accounts arise in different centuries, disciplines, and vocabularies. They describe the same structural condition. Sustained action presupposes continued allowance. Degradation does not negate enforcement. Duration indicates that regulation remains in force.

This work does not extend those traditions. It aligns them and applies the shared constraint to a domain where persistence is routinely misclassified. The convergence rests on repeated description of the same condition, not on agreement of theory or method.

¹ Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince*, trans. Tim Parks (London: Penguin Classics, 2014), chaps. 8, 17–19; Niccolò Machiavelli, *Discourses on Livy*, trans. Harvey C. Mansfield and Nathan Tarcov (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), bk. I, chaps. 18–19.

² *On War*, ed. and trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976), bk. I, chap. 7 (“Friction in War”); see also bk. I, chap. 1 (“What Is War?”).

³ Bruce S. McEwen, “Stress, Adaptation, and Disease: Allostasis and Allostatic Load,” *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences* 840 (1998): esp. sec. “Allostatic Load,” <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1749-6632.1998.tb09546.x>.

⁴ Norbert Wiener, *Cybernetics: Or Control and Communication in the Animal and the Machine* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1948), chaps. I, III–V.

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