

Solitary Watch

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://solitarywatch.org/2012/10/19/corcoran-state-prison-inmate-commits-suicide-in-solitary/>

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by [Sal Rodriguez](#) | October 19, 2012

Solitary Watch has recently confirmed that on August 28th, prisoner Armando Morales (CDCR number-P80673) committed suicide by hanging in his cell at California State Prison, Corcoran. The Kings County Coroners office confirmed that Mr. Morales was found unresponsive at 4:41 PM in his cell by prison staff. He was found on his cell floor with a shoelace and a blue blanket wrapped around his neck. Morales was being housed alone in his cell.

According to a [pen-pal ad](#) posted when he was 23, Morales, a Watts, California native, had been incarcerated since he was 16 years old. The post also indicates that he was being held in the Security Housing Unit (SHU) as of six years ago. His admission date at Corcoran is listed as 06/01/2000. People held in the SHU are generally housed in solitary confinement for periods of time ranging from 22 1/2 to 24 hours a day. Cells are generally no bigger than 810 feet.

According to the reports of Special Master to the US District Court for the Eastern District of California, between 2006 and 2010 suicides in the California prison system averaged 34 per year. Approximately 42% were committed by prisoners in the SHU or ASU (Administrative Segregation Unit).

According to California Prison Focus, Mr. Morales was being held in the 4B facility, which houses hundreds of validated gang members in solitary confinement, at the time of his death.

The Corcoran State Prison Public Information Office confirmed that Mr. Morales was being held in the Security Housing Unit at the time of his death, though no other information was made available.

In a letter to California Prison Focus, a man housed in the same unit as Morales reported that Morales was being pressured to debrief at the time of Morales suicide by Institutional Gang Investigators (IGIs). Debriefing is a process in which prisoners inform against their gang, and are transitioning out of the prison gang they belong to. For people in the SHU, it is one of the only ways they can be released from the SHU, aside from maxing out of their original sentence. The decision to debrief can be particularly stressful, as leaving prison gangs can result in becoming a target for retribution.

Corcoran State Prison houses 1,426 prisoners in the SHU or Protective Housing Unit, the latter of which houses people who are in the process of debriefing.

Solitary Watch will provide updates as more information becomes available. Anyone with information about Mr. Morales, particularly his family, can contact the writer at: sal_solitaryw@yahoo.com.

Sal Rodriguez was Solitary Watch's first and most prolific intern. Based in Los Angeles, he served as an editorial writer and columnist for the Orange County Register and the Press-Enterprise, and is now the opinion editor for the Southern California News Group.

Accurate information and authentic storytelling can serve as powerful antidotes to ignorance and injustice. We have helped generate public awareness, mainstream media attention, and informed policymaking on what was once an invisible domestic human rights crisis.

Only with your support can we continue this groundbreaking work, shining light into the darkest corners of the U.S. criminal punishment system.

by [Juan Moreno Haines](#)

October 25, 2022

by [Solitary Watch Guest Author](#)

October 13, 2022

by [Vaidya Gullapalli](#)

September 29, 2022

Solitary Watch encourages comments and welcomes a range of ideas, opinions, debates, and respectful disagreement. We do not allow name-calling, bullying, cursing, or personal attacks of any kind. Any embedded links should be to information relevant to the conversation. Comments that violate these guidelines will be removed, and repeat offenders will be blocked. Thank you for your cooperation.

my heart broke a million times while reading this ,i refuse to believe this armando was my

first love i wrote to him for 5 years he was such a loving person .he never gave up even if he was in a tough situation i still have all the cute stuff he sent to me .if this is true and you are really gone i love you baby till da end of time .im hurting right now my babyklown????god bless your beautiful soul

I do re-call seeing some letters from a Vanessa. More than likely you. Yes, unfortunately this news is true =(He is in a better place now and we will see him on the other side.

Why was such a supposedly good little boy locked up? He never stole, robbed, lied or broke any golden rules. He deserved a nicely furnished studio apartment type room, not a cell! With weekend passes, some pocket money, good weed and conjugal visits, he could have been a changed person.

You are an asshole. I dont have any friends or family that have ever been in Prison but I do have them that worked in a Prison. They would even agree that you are an asshole. All citizens in the U.S. have to account for breaking the law and all need to suffer negative consequences for doing so BUT the punishment should NEVER exceed the severity of the crime. Just being in Prison is punishment enough for any crime with the exception of Murder :Premeditated and/or Without Any Justifiable Reason and Rape of a Child. Solitary Confinement 23 hours per day is cruel and unacceptable punishment for the commitment of any other crimes,

The biggest scam and lie in the big beautiful country of United States is: Law enforcement, Prison, Home land security, the prison industrial complex, PIC..You tell the public you are keeping them safe, you tell the public theres no profit in incarcerating humans, warehousing people for money..Law enforcement is so out of control, astronomically draining our economy for the actual plan of controlling everyone. My question is this: If you keep locking up more and more of our men and women, Fathers and Mothers then who will pay all the taxes to keep our fraudulent Law enforcement going? Everyone reading this needs to look up Fema prison camps and wake up. I also want you to realize that prisoners are at our so called law enforcements mercy should this corrupt government collapse. I worry about what will happen if the government collapses and my husband is shot by correctional officers on orders from the government because marshall law has been declared. Our lived ones are more than just targets of abuse by the corrupt guards.they can be killed to supposedly protect people outside who will be shuffled into Fema prison camos where they have millions of plastic coffins and mass graves already dug in lower Arizona near the border.Wake up and research Fema prison camps and Jesse Ventura also has a special about the mass of coffins waiting.Get on the internet..plan on what you would do or might do if we were to wake up to this..I love my husband but Im so scared of what They can do to all of us..We are going to lose our freedoms..

My son is also in the Shu in Corcoran. The last time I went to visit him he was visibly different, he looked close to giving up. He has tried to stay positive but I can only imagine what he is really going through. Im going to see him in a few daysits torture for me also to see him there. Reading these comments have me even more concerned. My condolences to the family members of this young man that they lost. My heart breaks for you. It truly does. What can we do? Does anyone have any ideas.

I am so sorry for the loss of your loved one. My brother is currently in the SHU Corcoran. The conditions are inhumane. What can we do? please contact me, maybe together we can make a difference. lisabarrera209.lb@gmail.com

Hi all,
My condolences to the family. That is unimaginable.
My name is Heather and Im a journalism grad student at USC. I was referred to this story by the California Families Against Solitary. Would any of Armando Morales family members being willing to talk with me? Im doing a web page project on solitary confinement, and Id like to get the opinion of someone who knows about it personally.
If possible, please respond.
Thank you for your time, and Im sorry for your loss.
-Heather

I would be willing to talk with you. I am his sister.

Thank you for your response. Im sorry for your loss.
Please send an email to me at heathelp@usc.edu and Ill send my contact info.
I appreciate your willingness to talk with me.
Best regards,
Heather

Hi april i know you probably dont know who i am ,i wrote to your brother for many years i just found out that god took him to heaven im so sorry i still cant believe it

Thank you for your condolences. Its been almost 4 years and its still hard for me to believe he is gone.

The SHU is not the answer, The prison system needs lots of work, look and read up on the lucifer effect, Most employees at the prison system treat everyone with No Respect and if you want to make a complaint they never give you a form to fill out,the last 25 years i have been going the bus has been late (they are putting gas) at the front desk they take there time (mind you your visit is 1 Hr.) and if you complain they make you even later they LIE even other employees say they LIE, talk about the mail if your family memeber is suing crt

date or even parole wise idea is getting a lawyer because any paper that you try to send a letter of recommendation or legal work it wont get there on time a day or 2 late if you call they they will tell you the they only have one person and the cuts. we need help to stop this from recurring we can not rehabilitate our loved ones this way we need to break down the GREEN WALL the CLICKS, THE BULLYING that happens in there they talk about animal mistreatment what is this i am sorry for all the losses and all are in my prayers

I MISS U SOOO MUCH BRO I CANT FIND WORDS TO EXPRESS IT. I LOVE U RIP.

I just want to say I;m from Northern California and I been to that prison and shu.It is very sad that we are loosing so many people like this.god bless his soul

I am reading all the comments, tonite. And I am amased about all the info and about what happened to Armando Morales. I dont think I knew him. However, I do have a loved one there at Corcoran State P, at the SHU and he is on 4B. he is my nephew and has been there for about 5 years for no valid reason. He is accused of being an informant to some Mafia and they say that he was locked up in San Diego, BUT, my nephew has never ever, been locked up, in or near San Diego, and most of all, he has never been locked up before this. He was sent to Corcoran State Prison a month or so after he turned 18 yrs old. I am worried about my nephew. He has appealed to the State to help him get out of there as he is innocent, but they still have him there. Just as they have a lot of people that shouldnt be there. I thought the SHU was a temporary place to put inmates that got in trouble at the prison. Temporary meaning 1-2 days. My nephew has been there a little over 5 years, and I am truly worried about him. In addition, it is very hard to make an appointment. The phones to the Prison are not answered or are busy. Can someone help me. Please tell me if I can contact anyone in the State Office. I truly thank you.

My condolences to all the Family and relatives of Armando Morales. May he Rest in Peace. I will pray for you, and I leave these Bible verses. God have mercy on them that caused or had anything to do with his death.

Romans 12:19

Dear friends, never take revenge. Leave that to the righteous anger of God. For the Scriptures say, I will take revenge; I will pay them back, says the LORD.

Deuteronomy 32:35 It is mine to avenge; I will repay. In due time their foot will slip; their day of disaster is near and their doom rushes upon them.

It has come to our attention that the comments on this post were being used to carry on a personal argument that was becoming more and more vicious. That is not an appropriate use of this forum. We have removed all comments related to this argument and will remove all future comments on this subject. The Editors

Thats song is deep and the title is the same as I played for my moms when she passed. She was a freedom seeker. And ironically the section she is buried in is The Court of Liberty. I believe the things you say about your brother from what you write.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7NX9UuRyt0E>

THIS IS CINDY BOBBYS SISTER MAY U REST IN PEACE BRO I KNOW YOUR IN A BETTER PLACE I LOVE U & U WILL BE MISSED TREMENDOUSLY. MY BRO WAS A WARRIOR HE MADE THE BEST OUT OF THE HAND HE WAS DELT HE WAS VERY INTELLECTUAL & ARTICULATE .. HIS LOVE & LOYALTY CAME WITH NO CONDITONS IT WAS ALWAYS SINCERE & FROM THE HEART IT WAS UNCONDITIONAL I HAVE BEEN VERY LUCKY TO HAVE HAD HIM IN MY LIFE I LEARNED ALOT FROM HIMHE TAUGHT ME THAT LIFE IS TOO SHORT TO HOLD ANY GRUDGES OR HAVE HATE IN YOUR HEART IN ORDER TO MOVE FORWARD MUST LET GO OF THE PAST.. GOD WANTED HIS ANGEL BACK GONE BUT NEVER FORGOTTEN U WILL FOREVER IN MY HEART!!! THERES A SONG I WANTED 2 DEDICATE TO MY LIL. BIG BRO BY SHERYL CROW CALLED WILDFLOWER

As Momma says sister, and Bobbys aunt we all have the same blood running through our veins. Nothing can bond family together closer than that. He was one of the most honorable men that Ive ever known. He was a gentleman, a survivor, a poet, and my muse. I rocked him to sleep with the beating of my heart pressed against his when he was an infant. We shared words in letters, confessions from our hearts and souls that no body can ever take away. Whatever happened may never be known. I understand that people have to do what they have to do to seek revenge or find closure, but think the cost of such actions can be even more damaging. I believe, in my heart, that he did not take his own life, and I will be as much of an activist as I can be so that the next person in that cell hopefully will not suffer a similar injustice. But like Momma says, hes gone and nothing will ever bring him back. If someone did this to him they will have to face the reality when the day comes for them to meet their maker.

My son was an honorable man who stood up for what he believed in. Those who truly knew him know this. His family (biological) came first always. He suffered many hardships while incarcerated, but remained strong and true to his name. Many people are saying many things about him some true some not, he was a man of his word and loyal to those who deserved his loyalty.He was not legally married, and many might say she is hiding something, but regardless, he is gone and nothing will ever bring him back to me. He is FREE and at peace and I will forever love and miss him.

Im still not convinced that Mr. Morales took his own life.

The most important ingredient in making it is family.

Texas Monthly

December 2012

The Innocent Man, Part Two

During the 25 years that Michael Morton spent wrongfully imprisoned for murdering his wife, he kept three things in mind: Someday he would prove his innocence to their son. Someday he would find out who had killed her. And someday he would understand how this had happened to him.

by Pamela Colloff

Upon his release

Mike was unaccustomed to the everyday things he had once taken for granted: using metal silverware, or carrying a wallet, or being able to push open a door.

The tactile experience of being touched by another human being was foreign to him, and he was taken aback whenever his mother or his sister threw their arms around him.

It was a blessed, easy transition, he told me. I had my family to help me and a roof over my head. Honestly, my return to the free world was not overwhelming compared to everything I'd been through up until then. He delighted in mundane indulgences like taking off his shoes and walking barefoot across the carpet. Even doing the laundry, he told me, was its own pleasure. Sorting socks and folding underwear may be work for some folks, he said, but you approach it from a radically different perspective if you haven't been able to wear your own clothes for twenty-five years.

The process of reconnecting with Eric was less straightforward

Eric remembered. I didn't know how to react, because I didn't know him. I kept thinking, Should I be crying? What should I be feeling? I was just kind of stunned.

Eric had become much more receptive to welcoming Michael back into his life since the birth of their daughter. She looked at her husband. When you were turned off to the whole thing and you didn't want to meet Mike, I just said, You're going to understand his feelings as soon as this little girl's born, she reminded him. I knew you were going to understand what a father's love was and that it doesn't just go away.

Eric nodded. That little girl has been my saving grace, he told me.

I would like to know what is the action? How can we help inmates to move into a different life. I am trying to move ahead in action as my son was being tried for gang terms we fought it and I believe so many are not as fortunate as he to have help. I have ideas on how to help but need feedback.

And, so? We must go from comments to action. This stuff is NOT TOLERABLE in what they refer to as human society. Wherever you are, find a way to act/react/educate, put a fire under, scream from a mountain-top . . .

So true and my condolences to you and yours as well. I too often forget to express such things. Sometimes I think I have a mild case of asperger syndrome left over from the joint. Such sentiments are rarely heard there. Someone dies and life just goes on unless it is gang related and then only vengeance is in the air.

I still struggle with such things 40 odd years later.

Thank you Alan for your feedback. My condolence to you for ur loss. For our family this website has given some clarity to some lingering questions but no matter which way we turn, our brother is still gone. I feel for the families that have lost their loved ones in this matter..no family should ever have to endure such heartache

I know exactly how you feel I lost my little brother Victor in Salinas Valley in 2007.

My brother's death made me look for answers and the search lead me here.

Reading the stories of others helped me feel less alone and understand his motivations.

In his case I think the guards actually killed him since he was up for release after over a decade in various SHUs including the one your brother died in.

With so many inmates leaving us in this manner the surviving families should be informed about this site to help deal with the grief.

My lil brother was and still is an amazing man love u B.

Forever in our hearts lil brother love and miss you B!!!

R.I.P Lil Bro. You will forever be loved.

Bobby endured more than one can imagine while in Solitary @ the hands of his captors. He chose to take his life not as a sign of weakness but of strength! He knew the torture & torment would not stop and therefore as the teachings of a Samurai made the decision of the only way to achieve victory over CDC & the igi tactics by taking his own life over.

dang

P.O. Box 11374
Washington, DC 20008

info@solitarywatch.org

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