

# Solitary Watch

## Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

**<https://solitarywatch.org/2016/08/11/chelsea-manning-no-stranger-to-solitary-confinement-faces-indefinite-isolation-after-suicide-attempt/>**

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by [Julia Hettiger](#) | August 11, 2016

After attempting to take her own life early last month, Chelsea Manning faces indefinite solitary confinement while she serves her time at the Fort Leavenworth disciplinary barracks.

The former intelligence analyst for the U.S. Army is being investigated for having prohibited items in her cell and resisting being transferred out of her cell. If convicted for these violations, Manning could face more jail time and lose her chances of parole, as well as face solitary confinement. Manning, who is imprisoned for releasing confidential information to WikiLeaks, is serving 35 years with the chance of parole after the eighth year.

Manning has already experienced time in solitary confinement back in 2010, while she was being held pre-trial. I was held in extreme solitary confinement for just under 11 months, Manning said in her review of the book *Hell is a Very Small Place* on [Medium](#). First, in an 9 by 9 cage in Kuwait. Then, in an 8 by 6 cell stripped of all material items in Quantico, Virginia. I was watched by at least two people at all times.

It is also not the first time Manning has contemplated suicide while in solitary confinement. After two weeks of being in isolation for the first time, she was deemed suicidal, which landed her a month on suicide watch. She was then placed in isolation in Quantico, as a prevention of injury prisoner, which allows solitary confinement without verifying the need for it with a psychiatrist first. While in isolation for 17 hours a day, Manning sat across from two Marine Corps guards, who watched her through a one-way mirror. She was not permitted to lie down or exercise while in her cell.

Sometimes, to keep from going crazy, I would stand up, walk around, or dance, as dancing was not considered exercise by the Marine Corps, Manning said about her time isolation in Kuwait in a column published in [The Guardian](#). While in solitary, she was allowed a few hours of visitation a month, which meant meeting with family, friends and lawyers in a small room and communicating through a glass partition while still wearing shackles on her hands and feet.

Her recreation time was monitored closely, and she was permitted only 20 minutes at a time. For brief periods, every other day or so, I was escorted by a team of at least three guards to an empty basketball court-sized area, Manning said in her column. There, I was shackled and walked around in circles or figure-eights for 20 minutes. I was not allowed to stand still, otherwise they would take me back to my cell.

While her attempted suicide prompted this new threat of solitary, Manning may also face discrimination because she is a transgender woman. In a report published by [Black and Pink](#), it was found that 85 percent of members in the LGBTQ community in prisons face solitary confinement against their will.

Solitary confinement is also used as a tool of control over LGBTQ prisoners, especially transgender women and cisgender gay men, the report said.

While some transgender women ask to be placed in solitary confinement for their own safety, as many as 24 percent of the women surveyed by Black and Pink was placed for reasons not having to do with their safety. Other trans women, 23 percent of those interviewed, were isolated for their own safety against their will.

While prison staff may claim they are placing LGBTQ prisoners in solitary confinement for their own safety, it is often being done so as an attempt to decrease sexual activity amongst prisoners or to control what they see as disruption of the social order of the prison by LGBTQ prisoners, the report said.

In *The Guardian*, Manning described solitary confinement as cruel and inhumane, a no-touch torture that she believes should be ended completely.

In the time since my confinement at Quantico, public awareness of solitary confinement has improved by orders of magnitude. People all across the political spectrum including some who have never been in solitary or known anyone who has are now beginning to question whether this practice is a moral and ethical one, Manning wrote in her column. The evidence is overwhelming that it should be deemed as such: solitary confinement in the US is arbitrary, abused and unnecessary in many situations. We should end the practice quickly and completely.

Julia Hettiger is a writer and communications professional from El Paso, Texas. She has an MFA in Writing for Children and is passionate about the power of storytelling.

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

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September 29, 2022

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I posted this comment earlier but it disappeared, perhaps because it included a hyperlink. So I'll try again with the link removed. Here goes.

It is worth noting that there is no official documentary evidence that Chelsea Manning is being threatened with solitary confinement. All we have is hearsay from Manning herself, who is hardly an unbiased source. This includes a purported charge sheet typed up by Mannings PR firm, Balestra Media, supposedly dictated by Manning via phone. Considering Mannings long and florid history of self-serving discomposure (aka being a Drama Queen), skepticism in this instance is warranted.

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