

Solitary Watch

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://solitarywatch.org/2012/10/21/voices-from-solitary-it-has-zapped-me-of-my-personality/>

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by [Voices from Solitary](#) | October 21, 2012

The following comes from a prisoner held at the French Robertson Unit in Abilene, Texas. Robertson Unit is a maximum security facility that houses over 2,900 inmates. The prison houses a large number of inmates in Administrative Segregation long-term solitary confinement units. Similarly to California and other states, Texas segregates prisoners designated as members of certain gangs (referred to as Security Threat Groups). The author of this piece has been incarcerated for two years, entirely spent in the administrative segregation unit. Despite having a non-violent record consisting exclusively of drug related offenses, he is being held in segregation as an STG member due to having been previously designated an STG member when he was first incarcerated in 1997, for another non-violent drug offense. Sal Rodriguez

Let me sum up my experience for you in a sentence: Sensory depriving, concentration-camp style justice with dehumanizing factors on a long term, indefinite schedule, paid for by taxpayers.

Im here for Security Threat Group purposes, as a preventive measure under a blanket policy over gang members. Ive been in segregation ever since I got off the bus from county. Going on two years now.

This is my second trip through TDCJ [Texas Department of Criminal Justice]. Evidently they used evidence from my first trip down here to confirm me as a STG member. However, they have yet to provide me with and proof or evidence that they used to confirm my associated with so called STG. All my requests for information have been ignored or refused.

There is no need for me to be in segregation. Nothing in my criminal history or prison disciplinary records even remotely reflects a need for solitary housing. Only my association with a certain group of people, nothing on grounds of my actions as an individual. I have a direct need for drug treatment, but am not allowed to attend any classes. All of my felony convictions are related to my addiction. There is no positive stimulation offered here at all. There is no TV, no human contact whatsoever. We are handcuffed everywhere we go. Outside recreation twice a week, one hour per day by ourselves separated by fence from other inmates. We get inside recreation five days a week for one hour, by ourselves.

They offer us very few ways to help ourselves.

They feed us less than population inmates, no fresh fruit, very seldom fresh vegetables, mostly canned. Its a constant battle just to get cleaning supplies for our cells. Weve had a hand sized rag dipped in a bucket to clean our whole cell once in the past 2 1/2 months.

Where are the stats to prove that these measures actually work? As far as holding certain gang members back here in segregation for an indefinite amount of time, there are still gangs out there in population. May look good for them, but what about the stress and torture that is being done to the ones back here? I myself can tell for a fact that this cell has taken a toll on me emotionally. It has zapped me of my personality. Where is the justice in this type of treatment?

Im put in a single cell, fed through a slot, like a ravaging animal. Expected to stare at the walls for 22-23 hours a day while dodging bogus cases, for example: dont have anything sitting on the floor, dont have stuff on your desk unless you are using it and dont cover up the air vent no matter how hot or cold you may be.

So Im expected to sit in my cell, avoid bogus cases, be ignored, entertain myself with nothing, obey the nonsense rules that are clearly only for harassment and bullying measures and come out a reformed sober individual with respect for authority and the justice system.

Im treated like an animal for having a drug addiction.

The Voices from Solitary series publishes dispatches from people surviving the lived experience of solitary confinement.

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.

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Where is the justice in this type of treatment?

Asks this inmate.

Duh!

You are in prison- It is a prison not a fun house.
If you don't like it stop being a criminal.

So what can be done. My son has been there for over 2 years and I see the deterioration more and more, every visit. Every bogus charge indeed is keeping all of us imprisoned. Someone please help. That place is inhumane. What we do to save our family member.

P.O. Box 11374
Washington, DC 20008

info@solitarywatch.org

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