

Solitary Watch

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

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by [Aviva Stahl](#) | October 12, 2014



The following roundup features noteworthy news, reports and opinions on solitary confinement from the past week that have not been covered in other Solitary Watch posts.

At a Nebraska legislative committee, [two ombudsmen testified](#) that they feared Nikko Jenkins would become violent if released, and attempted for years to get him treatment and assistance transitioning. Their pleas were ignored. Jenkins, who had spent three and a half years in solitary confinement, killed four people within ten days of getting released.

A 36-year-old Florida serving 22 months for tax fraud [was found dead in her solitary confinement cell on October 1](#), just days after she wrote letters home specifying that a guard had threatened to kill her. Lawyers for the family have requested an investigation be conducted by the Department of Justice.

Writing for [PS Mag](#), Lauren Kirchner explores Why Solitary Confinement Hurts Juveniles More Than Adults.

At a New York City Council hearing, Council member Daniel Dromm [made reference](#) to last weeks *New Yorker* story about Kalief Browder, who spent nearly 800 days in solitary confinement after being wrongly accused of stealing a backpack. Officials on Rikers subjected this child to torture. There's no other way to put it, he said. Meanwhile, *the New York Times* editorial board [called for federal oversight](#) of Rikers Island.

In past years at least three individuals have died at Bridgewater State Hospital, Massachusetts prison for those with mental illness, as a result of being strapped to bed and placed in almost complete isolation, according to [the Boston Globe](#). Bradley Burns, who was diagnosed with paranoid schizophrenia, spent about 16 months completely immobilized before he died of a heart arrhythmia likely brought on by his medications and the restraints.

A [federal lawsuit filed against Vermont prison](#) officials details the case of Patient A, who was meant to serve a 21-day sentence on a parole violation but ended up spending seven months in solitary confinement. According to the lawsuit, the man suffered significant physical and psychological harm including psychotic breaks, malnutrition and weight loss, bruises and trauma from uses of force,

[The Epoch Times](#) published an article about the No Separate Justice campaign and the conditions of confinement endured by terrorism suspects.

October 10 was the 12th World Day Against the Death Penalty. In [this video](#), Dr. Terry Kupers explains how the decision to move death row to solitary confinement units in many prisons has compounded mental health issues among prisoners a clear violation of human rights standards.

Aviva Stahl is a Brooklyn-based reporter who writes about science/health at the intersection of mass incarceration, national security, and trans rights. Shes written for the New York Times, Wired, Buzzfeed News, Solitary Watch, and other outlets. Find her @stahlidarity and at stahlidarity.com.

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 [Caitlin Konya](#)

October 19, 2022

by [Mirilla Zhu](#)

October 12, 2022

by [Caitlin Konya](#)

October 5, 2022

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I cant begin to tell how angry I am over the deaths of the three patients at Bridgewater State Hospital. These men were tortured to death by cruel, sadistic and lazy staff members. You shouldnt get the death penalty because of being mentally ill.- especially at a psychiatric hospital. The mentally ill in prison are also killed by cruel, sadistic and lazy prison staff members who are negligent or outright abusive. Mentally ill prisoners are frequently encouraged to commit suicide and are frequently driven to kill themselves because of this relentless abuse and cruelty.

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