

Solitary Watch

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://solitarywatch.org/2011/04/01/isolation-units-within-u-s-prisons-ccr-panel-discussion-in-san-francisco/>

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by [James Ridgeway and Jean Casella](#) | April 1, 2011

The Center for Constitutional Rights will host a panel discussion next Tuesday in San Francisco on the subject of solitary confinement in U.S. prisons. Its free and open to the public, and Solitary Watch is a co-sponsor. Panelists include Dr. Terry Kupers, a leading expert on the psychological effects of solitary, whose [writing](#) has appeared here on Solitary Watch; Keramet Reiter, whose [work](#) on California's supermax prisons is well worth reading; and activist [Eddy Zheng](#), who served nearly twenty years for a crime committed when he was sixteen; as well as representatives of CAIR and the CCR.

ISOLATION UNITS WITHIN U.S. PRISONS: A PANEL DISCUSSION

Tuesday, April 5

6:30 8:00 p.m.

The Womens Building, AudreLorde Room

3543 18th Street #8

San Francisco, California

Featuring:

Alexis Agathocleous, Staff Attorney, Center for Constitutional Rights;

Zahra Billoo, Executive Director, Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR)-San Francisco Bay Area;

Dr. Terry Kupers, M.D.;

Keramet Reiter, JD, PhD Candidate Berkeley Law; and

Eddy Zheng, Prisoner Rights Advocate.

Moderated by Sara Norman, Attorney, Prison Law Office.

High on the agenda, no doubt, buy 2mg xanax online will be the two federal prison units called Communications Management Units (CMUs), where inmates phone calls, visits, and all communications with the outside world are severely restricted. The CCR challenged the constitutionality of the CMUs in a [lawsuit](#) filed a year ago. The two experimental units, at Marion and Terre Haute, were secretly created by the federal Bureau of Prisons during the Bush Administration, and have remained intact under the Obama Administration. They are supposedly designed to hold high-risk inmates, including terrorists, whose crimes warrant heightened monitoring of their external and internal communications. But the reality, the [CCR asserts](#), is that many prisoners end up in the CMUs for their constitutionally protected religious beliefs, unpopular political views, or in retaliation for challenging poor treatment or other rights violations in the federal prison system.

Just this week, a [federal judge ruled](#) that the CCR lawsuit could move forward, rejecting the government's motion to dismiss. Earlier this month, an excellent piece on the CMUs appeared in *The Nation* under the title [Gitmo in the Heartland](#).

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James Ridgeway (1936-2021) was the founder and co-director of Solitary Watch. An investigative journalist for over 60 years, he served as Washington Correspondent for the Village Voice and Mother Jones, reporting domestically on subjects ranging from electoral politics to corporate malfeasance to the rise of the racist far-right, and abroad from Central America, Northern Ireland, Eastern Europe, Haiti, and

the former Yugoslavia. Earlier, he wrote for The New Republic and Ramparts, and his work appeared in dozens of other publications. He was the co-director of two films and author of 20 books, including a forthcoming posthumous edition of his groundbreaking 1991 work on the far right, Blood in the Face. Jean Casella is the director of Solitary Watch. She has also published work in The Guardian, The Nation, and Mother Jones, and is co-editor of the book Hell Is a Very Small Place: Voices from Solitary Confinement. She has received a Soros Justice Media Fellowship and an Alicia Patterson Fellowship. She tweets @solitarywatch.

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

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wish i could go so dam bad the dr kupers was grassians arner at one time i would love to meet him to bad i know i cant make it but i love to lol i red his book grate book

Then we agree across the board. Just need to come up with a way to do it without torture. And the system is broken if it was ever working at all. Just worst rather than better all all fronts since I put my big toe in it in the 60s. I spent 11 months in a place that now averages over 60 months with worst results. ???

I also agree that there are dangerous inmates that must be restricted and segregated. However solitary confinement where basic human rights are denied, which, in my opinion is torture, is not the answer. There are so many issues with our corrections system. Complete reform is needed along with sentencing that fits the crime.

Well the cell phone issue is a common problem and have many examples just google it. In Miami a female CO was arrested after an inmate was found with a cell phone. How did they know it was her? She had texted him nude photos of herself. There was a Salinas Valley CO that had ties with a gang. On and on.

I know about the censors and the most connected of inmates have ways around them.

I think the temporary use of CMU s for such inmates is useful in protecting witnesses and such. It is when there is no end or no way of appealing your placement that is the biggest problem. The original planners envisioned a max of 18 months. Still a very long time especially for a mentally ill person. Placing the mentally ill in isolation should never happen. Oversight of these units by human rights organizations or other independent organizations could stop some of the abuse of the system.

I just dont see how in some cases you get around isolating a person that represents a legitimate threat. And that comes from someone that has spent time in solitary. Some of those around me were dangerously disruptive to the order. Riots and murders are set in motion by influential inmates. Some people like myself just want to serve my time and leave. Predatory inmates and rouge guards make that difficult.

I agree that is the question. In my view solitary confinement did nothing to impede the attempt (which was unsuccessful even with privileged prisoner/lawyer communication) other than perhaps encouraging the prisoner to use his attorney as an information mule.

I do not have any stats on the number of prisoners with cell phones but I do not believe that is a common occurrence in most prisons and I believe that is a result of corrupt guards selling the cell phones to prisoners.

This is a process required by the Administrative Procedures Act and it should have been followed three years ago when the first secretive facility opened knowing that the plans would be met with fierce opposition as previous proposals had been the CMUs were opened secretly and illegally. .With multiple lawsuits filed in opposition to the CMUs and with public exposure increasing the government is attempting to follow the law in hindsight.

All known communications are monitored but there are smuggled cell phones and in the case in the link I posted above it is the lawyer that was passing a hit list to an associate of the prisoner on the outside. So the question is how do you stop such incidents from getting innocent people killed?

Im not sure how this case demonstrates the need for solitary confinement. No prisoner can communicate freely with the outside world. All prisoner communication, whether writings or phone calls, are monitored. The only prisoner communication that should not be monitored, whether a prisoner is housed in solitary or the general population, is between a prisoner and their legal counsel.

A quote taken from:

Gitmo in the Heartland

Alia Malek

to use restrictive isolationist tactics against the leader of a gang or terror group who, if he could communicate freely with the outside world, would wreak violence on innocent people that's not an illusory concern, says David Cole, of Georgetown University Law School and The Nations legal affairs correspondent.

As much as I dislike long term solitary confinement here is a case that makes Coles point.

<http://www.chaunceybaileyproject.org/2010/11/29/commentary-case-against-bey-attorney-must-be-pursued/>

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