

Solitary Watch

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

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Our Weekly Roundup of News and Views on Solitary Confinement

by [Vaidya Gullapalli](#) | November 8, 2015

In Jezebel, Solitary Watch Contributing Writer [Aviva Stahl interviews](#) Synthia China Blast, a transgender woman who was isolated in involuntary protective custody for almost 20 years. Blast talks about her children, the abuse she suffered and the defense mechanisms she adopted in jail and after she was released.

[The Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals has overturned](#) a lower court ruling that freed Albert Woodfox. Back in June, a judge had ruled that Woodfox, the last member of the Angola Three still incarcerated, could not be tried fairly for a third time after two previous convictions were set aside given that 43 years had passed since the crime for which he would be tried. Woodfox has spent more than four decades in solitary confinement in Louisiana prisons.

Also out of Louisiana, Lafayette Parish Sheriffs office [settled](#) a wrongful death lawsuit with the family a man who died after 17 days in solitary confinement in 2012. The suit alleged that John Howard Horace Jr. was denied medication that he needed while incarcerated. He was originally arrested for disturbing the peace and was almost immediately placed in isolation.

A hunger strike [at a Texas immigration detention center](#) led to one of the leaders of the strike being placed in solitary in retaliation. The hunger strike [began on October 28](#) and within a week reportedly included hundreds. [The strikers are asking for](#) immediate release, but also listed grievances related to medical care and abuse by guards. Other leaders in the strike were transferred.

Since 2002, [USA Today](#) has tracked nine men released from a Texas prison, all of whom had spent long periods of time in solitary confinement. Here, Kevin Johnson tells the story of one man, who ended up reincarcerated and in solitary, against the backdrop of the arguments about solitary that have been slowly building momentum around the country, from California to New York to Texas.

In [Harpers](#), Helen Redmond writes movingly about meeting Willie Bosket, the man associated forever with New York's change of law to be able to prosecute children as young as 16 as adults. Bosket has now spent more than two decades in solitary confinement.

[A Medium story](#) looks at the effects of solitary on women, numbering 1600 in solitary confinement in New York state alone.

A [new paper](#) by Ian Kysel outlines a course of litigation for challenging the use of solitary confinement for children in jails and prisons. Also this past week saw the release of [a new report](#) by the law firm Lowenstein Sandler on how the states use solitary confinement when it comes to children.

Vaidya Gullapalli is a staff writer and editor with Solitary Watch. She is a lawyer and former public defender, and was previously a writer at The Appeal. She is on Twitter [@vgullap](#).

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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