

Solitary Watch

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://solitarywatch.org/2013/07/28/seven-days-in-solitary-72813/>

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by [Lisa Dawson](#) | July 28, 2013



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.

According to the [tally](#) kept by *The Miami Herald*, 68 of the 166 men held captive at Guantanamo are hunger-striking, with 44 being force-fed and three hospitalized. *The Guardian* [reports](#) on the Senate's first major hearing on Guantanamo closure since 2009, writing that divisions among panel members on whether to close the facility underscore the uphill battle President Barack Obama faces in fulfilling a five-year-old promise to shutter the facility.

The *Los Angeles Times* [reports](#) on the apparent suicide of California prison hunger striker Billy Guero Sells, who was held in SHU at California State Prison, Corcoran. The story states that Sells, 32, hanged himself in his isolation cell. Solitary Watch reports on the California prison hunger strike [here](#) and [here](#).

The *Los Angeles Times* [reports](#) that California authorities have sent independent monitors into nine state prisons to keep watch on the prison hunger strike. The story notes that, at Pelican Bay, they were investigating complaints by strike leaders that they were being blasted with cold air to weaken their condition as they went without food.

The Daily Californian [reports](#) on UC Berkeley student Steven Czifra, who spent eight years in solitary confinement and is now an advocate for California state prison reform, protesting the use of solitary confinement. Despite the joys that come with pursuing an education and having a fulfilling family life, Czifra still faces the lasting psychological effects of spending eight years detached from human interaction.

PBS NewsHour [reports](#) on the California prison hunger strike and the use of solitary confinement at Pelican Bay, noting the extraordinary length of time some inmates have been held inside. Some 500 men have been imprisoned at Pelican Bay for more than a decade. Once in the security units, most inmates are held indefinitely.

Writing for *The Daily Beast*, Sarah Shourd, Contributing Editor at Solitary Watch, [reports](#) on the growing movement against solitary confinement in the U.S., noting that the practice is used arbitrarily, often vindictively, and without oversight. Prisoners are placed in isolation as punishment for petty rule violations such as profanity, drug use or standing up to abusive guards.

The ACLU of Colorado issues [Out of Sight, Out of Mind](#), a report detailing the findings of an 18-month study which showed that the percentage of Colorado prisoners in solitary confinement who are classified as mentally ill has risen. According to the report, 54 of the 87 seriously mentally ill prisoners in solitary confinement had been held in isolation for longer than one year, 14 of whom had been held in solitary longer than four years.

In a recent [piece](#) on the ACLU's blog, death row exoneree Anthony Graves describes the inhumane conditions to which he was subjected on Texas death row, where he was held in solitary confinement. The piece also introduces [A Death Before Dying](#), a recently published report by the ACLU on the double punishment of being held in solitary confinement on death row.

Lisa Dawson served as an assistant editor, social media manager, and contributor at Solitary Watch. She continues to support prisoners and their family members who need help navigating re-entry. She is on Twitter [@endsolitary](#).

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 [Mirilla Zhu](#)

October 26, 2022

by [Caitlin Konya](#)

October 19, 2022

by [Mirilla Zhu](#)

October 12, 2022

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this is ALL SO VERY WRONG! People need to know about this! Being put in solitary is very similar to dying a slow death and mental anguish is far worse than any physical punishment that could be inflicted! THIS INHUMANE TREATMENT NEEDS TO END!!!

To those of you who care take every opportunity to tell others about Solitary Confinement in this country..how it is used, who ends up there, for how long, and why. Don't forget the youth and the mentally ill and the aged. How did we get to this place in this country? Can we turn it back, undo this torture? And what of the guards, the so called correctional officers who torment those so held? What becomes of them when all is said and done. Each one teach one. In the meantime, peace and love

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