

Solitary Watch

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://solitarywatch.org/2021/09/20/voices-from-solitary-this-inhumane-project-called-solitary-confinement/>

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by [Voices from Solitary](#) | September 20, 2021

Ronald Clark, 53, is currently held on Floridas Death Row at Union Correctional Institution in Railford. Death-sentenced individuals held by the Florida Department of Corrections are confined in a 63-square-foot cell for upwards of 23 hours a day, and subjected to additional isolation for disciplinary infractions. On his blog [The Death Row Poet](#), Clark writes to members of his community detailing his lived experience in isolation. The following piece was written by Clark with hopes of shedding light on the state of solitary confinement in Florida and the effect it has on individuals. Sara Rain Tree

Most of you out there will never experience this hell called solitary confinement. So you'll never understand the tormented mind. You will never comprehend the daily struggles that an individual goes through. Where at times you're struggling to get through not another day, not an hour, but just another minute. You can read about this until you're blue in the face. I can describe it in great detail, but you still would not grasp the daily psychological hell that we endure.

Here you are forced to exist with people that you have nothing in common with, other than a death sentence and surviving another day in this cage. You may be around an individual who talks to himself for hours on end. Or several inmates who argue all day long, talking about their religious dogma and ideology or their political views. And you can't escape the madness!

You've got no idea what we have to cope with inside this hell hole that is solitary confinement. There are staff who are like little kids who see a dog behind a fence and poke him with a stick to try and set him off. Or like some kid who teases the monkey with peanuts until the monkey slings feces on them. But when you work 12- to 16-hour shifts day in and day out, in a place that has no humanity, you become numb to human suffering. Your mercy and levels of compassion for any and all life forms start to slip away.

I've seen them abuse mentally ill people, placing them in a cage with nothing. And watch, yes witness, that individual struggle with the cold temperatures that are in excess of 40 degrees, and even open the windows to cause further misery! I've seen them beat people and the joy that was in their eyes as they threw punch after punch, kick after kick, causing harm to another man! I've seen tobacco spit into the food they've served us! I've seen them vindictively destroy family photographs and other property to try to get a reaction out of us.

Yes, they try to instill fear into you. Try to push you over the edge! Treating you in a manner for which most people wouldn't treat their dog. This is a living freaking nightmare! And it's all about day-to-day, hour to hour, minute to minute survival in this sick twisted world of solitary confinement! This is hell! No TV, no radio, tablet, or any other thing will ensure your sanity. The human mind is not designed for these cages! Yes, we grasp, at any and everything trying to distract ourselves from the daily horror that we exist in. But we are human, even if you don't recognize us as human. Yes, you are scarring our minds, wounding our souls, with this inhumane project called solitary confinement. May God have mercy because it's lacking in this place.

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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