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Our Weekly Roundup of News and Views on Solitary Confinement

by [Valerie Kiebala](#) | March 18, 2018

The Tribune [covered](#) a protest this weekend calling for the San Luis Obispo Sheriff Ian Parkinson to step down from his re-election campaign, after a video exposed the conditions of the death of Andrew Holland, a mentally ill man being held in custody at San Luis Obispo County Jail in California. Holland had been restrained naked in a solitary confinement cell for 46 hours before he died of a pulmonary embolism in January 2017. The video shows deputies watching Holland as he struggled to breathe and lost consciousness, smiling as paramedics attempted to revive him. Corbin Holland described the treatment his brother received: Andrew was treated like an animal, worse than an animal. Fifteen months in and out of isolation could destroy the strongest of minds.

The Uptown Peoples Law Center [put out](#) a press release on two lawsuits filed on behalf of the mother of Tiffany Rusher, a woman who committed suicide while held at Sangamon County Jail in Springfield, Illinois. Rusher had been placed on suicide watch held alone in a bare cell with only a suicide smock for eight months, though suicide watch is meant to be used only for a few hours until the correct treatment is determined. After Rusher was treated at the hospital for her mental health conditions, she was arrested again and held in solitary confinement upon her return to Sangamon County Jail. After three months, Rusher hanged herself. First they tortured her, then they killed her, said Alan Mills, executive director of the Uptown Peoples Law Center.

WJTV12 [reported](#) that psychiatrist Terry Kupers testified at trial this week that the East Mississippi Correctional Facility's (EMCF) practice of keeping seriously mentally ill people in solitary confinement causes psychological damage. Kupers recommended that EMCF remove the individuals with mental illness from solitary confinement in order to prevent further damage. While state officials claim that the prison has not violated constitutional rights, US District Judge William Barbour Jr. will hear testimony to determine whether the conditions at EMCF constitute cruel and unusual punishment.

MyNewsLA.com [reported](#) that Apolonio Gamez, a former federal prison guard accused of sexually assaulting two incarcerated women, made his initial court appearance this week in Riverside, California. Gamez allegedly threatened a woman with solitary confinement if she did not perform a sexual act. The victim said she felt frozen and powerless in fear, so she complied. Gamez will have his federal arraignment next month and could face up to 15 years in federal prison, if convicted.

[According](#) to the *Akron Beacon Journal*, investigators released 33 pages out of an 800-page document this Friday regarding the death of a 36-year-old mentally ill man held in Summit County Jail in Ohio last September. Allegedly, Anthony Jones, who suffered from schizophrenia, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder, spent five days in solitary confinement before his death. An altercation occurred the day before his death when a deputy attempted to move Jones from his cell, possibly back to solitary. An autopsy revealed three pairs of puncture marks that strongly suggest Taser deployments on Jones' chest, which might have caused his cardiac arrest. The family's lawyer says that Jones' mental illness should have been recognized, addressed and dealt with accordingly during his time at the Summit County Jail.

The Brown Daily Herald [reported](#) on the use of solitary confinement in Rhode Island, discussing the experience of Luis Estrada, who spent most of his first three and a half years at Rhode Island Adult Correctional Institution in solitary. Estrada explained the effects of the isolation, including 30 pounds of weight loss in nine months. You're not noticing that you're getting pale that you fatigue easily. University of Pittsburgh Professor Jules Lobel, who recently spoke at Brown, explained, Rhode Island has overused solitary in the past and has kept people in poor conditions.

Capital & Main [reported](#) on the case of Jean Carlo Jimenez Joseph, a 27-year-old man who committed suicide in May of 2017 at Immigration and Customs Enforcement's (ICE) Stewart Detention Center in Georgia. Jimenez was held in solitary confinement for 19 days before he hanged himself, despite his struggle with mental illness and his suicidal behavior. The reason given for his placement in solitary was that he had leaped from the second floor, declaring himself Julius Caesar, in what his sister explained as a previous suicide attempt. Psychiatrist Dr. Terry Kupers noted, Placing a suicidal prisoner in segregation is like placing someone with bad asthma in a burning building. The Stewart Detention Center is operated by private prison contractor CoreCivic and has been criticized for failing to provide medical care, mental health services, and treatment that uphold the rights of those detained.

Valerie Kiebal was a contributing writer and editorial and project manager for Solitary Watch, and is now the media director of Straight Ahead, which is building a decarceration movement throughout Pennsylvania. Her work has also appeared in The Root, Truthout, the Chicago Reporter, and Shadowproof.

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](#)

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by [Caitlin Konya](#)

October 5, 2022

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