

Solitary Watch

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

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by [Aviva Stahl](#) | March 30, 2014



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.

For the first time in at least a decade, a guard at Rikers Island has been [arrested in relation to a death in custody and charged with violating the prisoners civil rights](#). In 2012, 25-year-old Jason Echevarria swallowed a packet of detergent while on a solitary confinement unit for people with mental illness; he died several hours later. Captain Terrence Pendergrass, who allegedly refused to allow more inexperienced guards to call medical staff, appeared in federal court on Monday and was released on bond.

After the recent 6.9 earthquake in Eureka, California, officials at Pelican Bay State Prison opted to immediately enhance prison security rather than focus on the physical safety of those locked up. [Writing in The San Francisco Bay View](#), Joe AJene Valentine describes feeling the earthquake, then fearing the concrete slabs around him might collapse: the profoundly indifferent psychology of our captors was blatantly shown by the fact that all of the cage doors were immediately double locked! The message was most clear: Your safety is not hardly our priority. I thought aloud: Our lives dont mean sh!

[PBS has released a preview](#) of its upcoming investigation into solitary confinement, entitled Solitary Nation.

California has [opened public response period](#) for the proposed Security Threat Group / Step Down Program. These regulations will govern how individuals are placed into and released from Californias Secure Housing Units.

A US Army veteran currently imprisoned at an immigration detention center in Washington state told [Democracy Now](#) that he has been placed in solitary confinement in retaliation for his activism on the inside. His letter calling for a work stoppage was intercepted by staff. [Truth-Out](#) reported that several detainees on a hunger strike at the Joe Corley Detention Facility in Conroe, Texas endured similarly retaliatory measures.

Virginias Attorney General Mark Herring is seeking to [overturn a recent court ruling](#) in which the procedures governing conditions on confinement on death row were found to be unconstitutional. Last fall, US District Judge Leonie Brinkema found that Virginia had violated the due process rights of the condemned by placing them in solitary confinement solely on the basis of their sentence. [Solitary Watch previously reported on Judge Brinkemas ruling [here](#).]

Aviva Stahl is a Brooklyn-based reporter who writes about science/health at the intersection of mass incarceration, national security, and trans rights. Shes written for the New York Times, Wired, BuzzFeed News, Solitary Watch, and other outlets. Find her [@stahlidarity](#) and at [stahlidarity.com](#).

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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I pray that solitary confinement ends ..my son is 16 and in solitary. .stop the madness..

P.O. Box 11374
Washington, DC 20008

info@solitarywatch.org

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