

Solitary Watch

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://solitarywatch.org/2012/07/28/voices-from-solitary-surviving-the-prison-within-a-prison/>

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by [Voices from Solitary](#) | July 28, 2012

The following was submitted to Solitary Watch by Ricardo Truth Noble, who has spent five years in Pennsylvanias Restrictive Housing Units. Pennsylvanias RHUs hold over 1,500 inmates in solitary confinement. Incarcerated for 21 years, he is serving life-without-parole. Noble describes the experience of being in the RHU as an intense and hopeless place where he has had to learn to turn the experience of solitary into a chance for positive development. This is an excerpt from a larger series of writings by Noble, and is entitled RHU Parallel. Sal Rodriguez

Within every adversity there exists a seed (opportunity) of an equal or greater benefit. Napoleon Hill

RHU means Restricted Housing Unit (commonly called the hole). The RHU is a prison within a prison. Its the worst (kind of condition). So, an equal potential exists to develop and bring about a better (more positive and productive) benefit, condition, or response also. When put into the worst situations you have to tap into yourself and bring about/out the best in you to be able to grow or even remain stable.

In the RHU its not just you versus the Administration. Its you versus you. Because you are brought face-to-face with yourself. During such time of confinement the routine thinking habits that you develop daily will **Really Hurt U** or **Really Heal U**. The way you think is reflected in the way you behave. And your behavior patter will design your present and future.

In the RHU life is intense. Especially in the beginning weeks or months. As time passes your mind begins to become clouded with mixed emotions, anger, guilt, hate, paranoia, hopelessness, loneliness, and other frustrations. Some who fail to productively channel their frustrations tend to take it out on those closest to them (mainly other prisoners) or even themselves because they cant lash out on the ones (the Administration) who can affect change of the physical aspects of their harsh condition. To do so temporarily feels good but doesnt really bring about a positive change because the ones who can affect change (upper level Administration) were not affected. And ones situation become even more cloudy. But with discipline and practice you can bring clarity to your life and strengthen yourself from within. Exercise and focused reading helps fight off laziness and emotional breakdown.

Setting goals for the near and distant future still applies when housed in the RHU. It gives you something to work toward and look forward to, thus keeping hope alive and your spirit strong. Think of positive affirmations to think or speak to yourself or focus on desired goals and happy times when your mind starts to wander or drift into thoughts of misery, anger, frustration, and other thoughts that may interfere with ideas of what you desire. In the physical RHU only your movement is restricted, not your thinking.

Its interesting that the same mental conditioning it takes to stay focused in the RHU is the same needed to grow and be productive in society. Same principles, just different place. Some people in society are not in physical prisons, but are living in a self-imposed RHU. **Unit** means one considered to constitute part of a whole (community, society). **Housing** means ones environment or position in life. To be limited in ones thinking or expectations is to be **Restricted**. And if ones thinking or expectations are limited, so will ones movement be or where one positions (or houses) themselves. Some people spend most of their lives without ever leaving their neighborhood, city, or state or are stuck in dead end jobs that they are not satisfied with but refuse to break the limited thinking pattern that bars them from expanding and fulfilling their life.

Also, in RHU some breakdown and try to sleep their time away or resort to medication in hopes of experiencing a temporary escape. Very much like in society when one resorts to alcohol or drugs. But when one awakes (sobers) they are in the same or worse situation than the one they tried to leave or forget.

In essence, life is what we make it, regardless of where we are or what condition we are in. Change begins within, then branches outward. And in order to productively change ones outer condition one must strengthen and change their inner condition (thinking pattern).

Whether you are in a prisons RHU or a personal RHU in society, your mind does not have to be confined to the destructive or stagnant norm of your immediate environment. There is always the option to prepare a better situation for yourself by thinking outside the box (norm).

Stay focused and motivated.

Peace,

Ricardo Noble #BX9351

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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.

by [Voices from Solitary](#)

September 30, 2022

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Precious Precious Otto such a gift from The Lord Jesus Christ you are John 14:12 Because you believe in Me (TRUTH) greater works will you do than I for I go to Our Father
The War Widows

Being Solitary is such a torture. Ive found just writng to one in solitary helps feel the need for communicating.
I write many sitting in prison always ready to write another.
If you know one sitting in Solitary just send me there info.
visit my facebook see artwork from Jonathan sitting in solitary in Ca.

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Solitary Watch

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