

Solitary Watch

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://solitarywatch.org/2014/01/19/seven-days-solitary-11913/>

Campaign and Advocacy

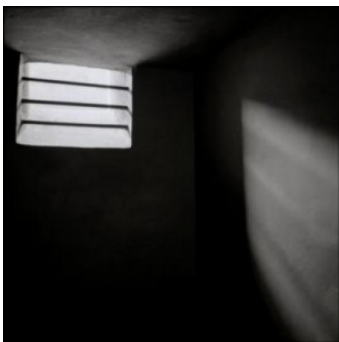
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by [Jean Casella](#) | January 19, 2014



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.

An [NPR report](#) by Laura Sullivan discusses the treatment of people with mental illness in Chicago's Cook County Jail and in jails around the country, including the extensive use of solitary confinement. Sullivan's piece includes disturbing accounts of visits to the psych wards at the jail, where one-third of those held are mentally ill.

The [annual report](#) (in French) of L'Acat (Christian Action for the Abolition of Torture) includes an account of long-term solitary confinement (*isolement prolongé*) in the United States, calling it la forme la plus répandue de torture psychologique.

As [Courthouse News Service](#) reports, Public criticism may have led prison officials to suspend the visitation privileges of a woman married to a Georgia inmate, a federal judge ruled. The woman was banned from visiting her husband after she spoke to the media about the 2012 hunger strike he and others had launched to protest conditions in solitary confinement.

On [Alternet](#), Alex Kane reports on the No Separate Justice campaign, which opposes an abusive system that has wreaked havoc on the lives of hundreds of Muslims accused of terrorism-related offenses. Solitary confinement, including coercive pretrial solitary, figures heavily in the treatment of these individuals.

Matt Stroud reports for [In These Times](#) on the long-running Dallas 6 case, back in court in Pennsylvania this week. In this case, six prisoners are charged with inciting a riot after covering their solitary confinement cell windows. The prisoners claim that they were mounting an act of protest in the wake of an advocacy group's report about harsh conditions and treatment at the prison.

A new report (in Spanish) from the [Inter-American Commission on Human Rights](#) (IACHR) on pretrial detention highlights the excessive use of pretrial solitary confinement (*aislamiento solitario*) in the United States, including its use on children awaiting trial in the adult criminal justice system.

According to [Courthouse News Service](#), the federal 9th Circuit ruled that prison officials in Washington must face claims that their refusal to turn off the lights in segregation cells amounts to cruel and unusual punishment. The plaintiff in the case, which the state sought to have dismissed, claimed that he developed insomnia, migraine headaches and confusion while being held for nearly two weeks in the Special Management Unit (SMU), in which at least one light stays on all day and night.

A [bill](#) to limit the use of solitary confinement was introduced in the New Hampshire state legislature.

On [Alternet](#), Solitary Watch contributor Aviva Stahl profiles Ojore Lutalo, who spent decades in solitary in New Jersey because, according to official documents, his radical views and ability to influence others poses a threat to the orderly operation of this Institution.

Jean Casella is the director of Solitary Watch. She has also published work in The Guardian, The Nation, and Mother Jones, and is co-editor of the book *Hell Is a Very Small Place: Voices from Solitary Confinement*. She has received a Soros Justice Media Fellowship and an Alicia Patterson Fellowship. She tweets @solitarywatch.

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 read good things changing for the better in so many other states. Does anyone know anything in Colorado? Juvenile LWOP situations? Solitary? Do they know who actually shot the Exec Dir of the DOC 10 months ago? The media is so harsh and full of misinformation on paroled persons.

For nine years I have worked in a state Close Management prison. Inmates are very vulnerable to abusive correctional officers because the only place they are not shackled and cuffed is in their cells alone. They are often denied, showers, yard privileges, and mental health and medical callouts because officers just don't want to work. Of course when officers are written up for abuses, the report almost always is investigated by inspectors housed in the prison and it comes back unfounded. Not only should correctional officers receive more education, psychological testing should also be done. We label inmates with Anti Social Personality Disorder without any testing at all. However, I truly believe that many correctional officers have that diagnosis and should never set foot in a prison unless they are behind the door.

After having been involved with and in correctional facilities for over 25 years (on a national and international level) I would even go further, and claim that a lot of not most of correctional officers (individuals working in correctional facilities in or on what level ever) are unfit to the job given, unfit for the responsibilities they are having, and unfit for anything but being put behind bars themselves! Some of them would not be out of the ordinary (so to speak) when they would be assigned to duties in concentration/death camps as created and maintained by the Nazis of Adolf Hitler, like Auschwitz, Bergen-Belsen etc. etc.

Of course there are individuals who try to do their best, but are unable to function in a social manner and way, simply because they are obstructed by the sick ones (so to speak), the system is rotten, has become rotten due to the fact that once bad apples corrupted the system and no one was willing/able to correct them (removing them from the basket) they were able to corrupt the whole system deeper and deeper. A complete overhaul is needed, meaning that actually all must be removed, and new must be brought in, after mental, social and intelligence checks!

But that's only my opinion.

I GOTTA RESPOND TO THAT !!!!!!!!! THERES NO QUESTION IN MY MIND THAT MANY CORRECTIONAL OFFICERS HAVE MENTAL PROBLEMS and SHOULD NEVER BE ALLOWED TO SET FOOT IN A PRISON DURING MY 37 YEARS IN MAX FEDERAL JOINTS I WITNESSED MANY ATTACKS ON HAND CUFFED PRISONERS and MANY GUARDS GET STABBED and KILLED. PRISONERS KILLED BY GUARDS??? YES, I KNOW OF MANY INCIDENTS IN WHICH INMATES WERE KILLED. I WON'T HERE LIST ALL THE NAMES BECAUSE ITS TOO LONG ONE PARTICULAR INCIDENT HAPPENED AT THE FEDERAL TRANSFER CENTER IN OKLAHOMA.. THE WARDEN, THOMAS KINDT, NOW DEAD, TOLD INVESTIGATORS THAT THE GUARDS WHO KILLED HIM WILL LIKELY NEVER BE NAMED BECAUSE OF THE BLUE CODE THE OFFICER CODE OF SILENCE MAY NEVER BE BROKEN ON THE CASE GUARDS KEEP THEIR MOUTH SHUT WHEN OTHER GUARDS ABUSE AND KILL INMATES THATS THE WAY IT WAS and THATS THE WAY IT IS TODAY NOTHING HAS CHANGED!!!! IF A GUARD BREAKS THE CODE OF SILENCE HE WILL BE OSTRACIZED and RUN OUT OF THE PRISON!!! I SAW THAT HAPPEN TO TWO DOCTORS WHO CAME TO MY AID AFTER I WAS BADLY BEATEN AT THE FEDERAL MEDICAL CENTER IN SPRINGFIELD, MISSOURI DURING MAY 1976 IT TOOK 7 YEARS TO BRING A FEDERAL LAWSUIT TO COURT ABOUT THE ISSUE LOST IT and EVERY GUARD COMMITTED PERJURY TO ESCAPE LIABILITY. THE FEDERAL PRISON SYSTEM IS A CORRUPT ORGANIZATION ANY QUESTIONS?? MY E-MAIL ADDRESS IS- MARTINMCNALLY692@GMAIL.COM

I SPENT OVER 20 YEARS IN SOLITARY CONFINEMENT CELLS HAVING LIGHTS ON 24/7 IS INDEED CRUEL & UNUSUAL PUNISHMENT THAT DRIVES PEOPLE NUTS !!!! WHILE AT USP MARION IN THE MID-70S, I WAS HELD IN A SEGREGATION CELL THAT WAS FREEZING DURING WINTER. HAD 2 BLANKETS. YEAH, IM TOTALLY MAD ABOUT THE FEDERAL BUREAU OF PRISON ABUSES and DURING 37 YEARS IN THE BOP I WAS FEDERALLY INDICTED TWICE FOR ATTACKING GUARDS.. IM OUT OF PRISON NOW and DO WHAT I CAN TO HELP IN MATTERS OF PRISON ABUSES.. IM ABLE TO VENT MY RAGE UTILIZING MY COMPUTER BECAUSE I HAVE THE FACTS ABOUT WHAT REALLY GOES DOWN INSIDE THE JOINTS. WHEN I BLOG I ALWAYS USE MY FULL NAME SO THERES NO MISTAKING WHAT IM ABOUT AND WHO I AM. SINCERELY, MARTIN J. MCNALLY, CEO, MCNALLY ENTERPRISES-ST. LOUIS

We all have the same goal but each of us takes a road that they believe will take them to their destination. While I attend rallies prior to the meetings of the Board of Correction and even testified at the January meeting, I believe the key to the problem is the lack of

educational requirements for a correction officer. In some states a GED or High School diploma will get you the job after passing a written test. In some states prior military service is sufficient. To handle nearly 12,000 imprisoned people on Rikers Island takes more than a threat or actual use of force, it takes communication skills, empathy, street smarts, and critical thinking skills. As a 74 year old matriculated as a student in Kingsborough Community College majoring in criminal justice I find no student contemplating a career as a correction officer, and when you mention Rikers Island , you may as well have said Devils Island. I intend to distribute flyers, meet with students and faculty at John Jay and Kingsborough and relate how urgent that good people enter corrections. I failed to convince COBA and Norman Seabrook that excessive force will not be tolerated. I am now going directly to correction officers who have not given up their humanity , who would be willing at great risk to themselves to report brutality and indifference by old timers who get promoted based on the cumulative charges of excessive force. My group will be called BIT, jail slang for short term sentence. The individual and his actions based on his conscience will be the basis of the group. Consensus is inaction. Silence is Betrayal.

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