

Solitary Watch

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://solitarywatch.org/2012/03/13/north-carolina-prisoners-say-they-were-placed-in-solitary-confinement-for-going-on-strike/>

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by [Sal Rodriguez](#) | March 13, 2012

Prison activists are holding a [call-in day](#) in support of eight inmates held in solitary confinement at Central Prison in North Carolina. According to their account:

On December 16th, 15 prisoners working in the kitchens at Central Prison, in Raleigh, sat down on the job in protest of the hours, lack of gain time, and working conditions. Prisoners in these kitchens are made to work ten hours a day, *seven days a week*. The strikers refused to go back to work until questions were answered regarding their hours and gain time. Instead of addressing their concerns, the head kitchen corrections officer told the men to, get [their] sorry asses back to work, and called in for backup. This is the same facility where a scandalous media report on conditions in the mental health ward forced Warden Branker into early retirement.

Despite the peaceful nature of the protest, guards soon came and threatened the men into returning to work. Eight of the men, however, continued to refuse to work until their questions were asked. These men were charged with disobeying a direct order and work refusal, and placed in solitary cells. Just a few days ago, the men were given an abrupt disciplinary hearing, in which they were railroaded into I-Con (Intensive Control) as punishment. I-Con is an intensive form of segregation, typically 23 hours a day in a small solitary cell, with few if any resources available, constantly censored mail, and little recreational activity. Sentences on I-Con often last *6 months or longer*. One prisoner wrote about the hearing, I tried to plead my case to the hearing officer, but it didn't matter. She didn't even listen. It was already pre-arranged what the outcome would be. It amazes me what Central Prison gets away with. They don't even care about policy. They do what they want.

Intensive Control is [defined](#) by the North Carolina Department of Corrections as the long-term removal of close custody felon or minimum custody level misdemeanor inmates from the general inmate population to confinement in a secure area. The intent is the control of offenders whose behavior has proven to be repeatedly disruptive to the operations of the facility, non-compliant with instructions and orders, or as a transition following assignment to maximum control status. Intensive control is authorized at any point during an offender's confinement if needed to contain the offender in a more secure environment over a long period of time.

Depending on precisely which charges were brought against the inmates, they can be held in isolation for 30-60 days per charge, according to the [disciplinary rules](#) of the DOC.

Two other inmates have written a [letter](#) in support of the eight inmates.

The North Carolina Department of Corrections did not respond to requests for comment at the time of this publication.

Sal Rodriguez was Solitary Watch's first and most prolific intern. Based in Los Angeles, he served as an editorial writer and columnist for the Orange County Register and the Press-Enterprise, and is now the opinion editor for the Southern California News Group.

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 [Juan Moreno Haines](#)

October 25, 2022

by [Solitary Watch Guest Author](#)

October 13, 2022

by [Vaidya Gullapalli](#)

September 29, 2022

Solitary Watch encourages comments and welcomes a range of ideas, opinions, debates, and respectful disagreement. We do not allow name-calling, bullying, cursing, or personal attacks of any kind. Any embedded links should be to information relevant to the conversation. Comments that violate these guidelines will be removed, and repeat offenders will be blocked. Thank you for your cooperation.

We've all heard that you have to acknowledge you have a problem before you can start doing something about it.. while I still agree there are people such as you describe in prison, I still maintain there are those that believe their life of crime is a viable lifestyle. I'd consider it an accomplishment if the prison system gave some acclimation training before releasing someone to the street after they've been down for 30 years. Without a strong support system on the outside, chances are good they will be back inside before long.

With your husband's situation, consider contacting one of the advocate groups. A quick Google should turn up some NC ones; so should browsing around on this site. Documentation is key. They should be able to guide you how to best document the situation. I will say that it's possible if the AC failed but the facility is keeping ventilation going to the cells, they may not be in violation. As I mentioned, air conditioning isn't a right/requirement. Ventilation certainly is.

(As an aside, close custody typically requires the inmate to present their hands through the open hatch in the cell door for handcuffs to be applied before the cell door is open.)

As for the poo slinger? He'd done it multiple times. It had gotten to the point that when the individual wouldn't give his cup back after mealtime (he was in seg, so his meals were served to him) the cell extraction team would be called to retrieve the cup from his cell. The warden himself came to ask him why. No real explanation given, though he mentioned he didn't like it when the orange crush comes.

Why fling? Because they can. Boredom, thrills, attention, orders from others, the reasons are endless, and most don't make sense. In some prisons, flinging is a weekly occurrence.

The prison mentioned in this thread, Central Prison, houses over 750 inmates according to their webpage. Problems are a small percentage of the total population. Most of the population co-exists with the staff. Just wanted to mention that.

P

Rochelle, I'll agree that there are examples of each situation you've described currently in prison. Would you agree that there are individuals in prison simply because they made a conscious decision to break the law? That, in essence, crime is the lifestyle they chose?

I can't speak as to your husband.. I don't know if you've contacted the Innocence Project type organizations that currently operate in NC. They have been successful, but it takes time.

Some prisons have AC, and some do not. I assume you're talking about air conditioning in the block. I don't believe it's a requirement per se for a prison to have AC. Did the inmates file a grievance? My suggestion would be to write a letter to the prison admin asking about the problem. Keep records of all communications, and consider escalating the letter writing higher and higher until you get a reasonable response. Keep in mind that equipment failures may require some time to get the systems back working again.

No one gets imprisoned due to simplicity.

I have worked with traumatized people for over two decades, and most were either perpetrators or victims. The sad thing is that the only difference between the two is that the perp, rather than be forced to continue being victimized, had to identify with and become stronger than the perp to survive.

Those of us who break the cycle do so because someone emotionally healthier took us in, cared for us, and taught us how to become Aware. If there were more mental health programs in the community geared toward preventative measures to help underprivileged of all skin colors, instead of excuses allowed for some perps and not others, then true reformation could take place. Why aren't prisons giving prisoners DBT, healing toxic shame through inner child group therapy, or depth psychology sessions? Because keeping we the people broken, isolated and confused is America's cash cow.

Locking a wild, wounded dog in a cage does not domesticate him, it makes him worse. When an experienced animal trainer takes this dog and works with him regularly, teaching and giving positive reinforcement, miracles occur.

As an answer to your ending paragraph, my response is that they don't have windows that open, and their doors were closed, as they were in lock down. How are the prisoners supposed to function? If the doors had to be unlocked for the men to be handcuffed, how were they refusing lock down to be so placed in isolation for now 8 days? I don't know if he will be allowed to write escalating letters. They won't accept mine, and sometimes they throw his grievances in the trash.

He and I both understand that his being where he is will be a way to make a difference in the future after we fight to get him released, it's just very hard sometimes to sit still in the middle of the fear, and face it. We will keep doing all we can. I appreciate your even listening.

One last thing. I would personally be curious to know why the prisoner threw the excrement. Did anyone ask him?
Warm regards,
Rochelle Long, Atsila Agisdii

Yes, you are right. Most do. My husband was one of them that co-exist, which is why he is asking for the tape of the incident, which is where he was fanning around his door at the window of it, trying to get air.

He has now been in seg for 13 days, with the other men, where they are only allowed to bathe every other day, and after their chow at 3:30, they are not allowed any access to canteen because it is not required to do so, as a punishment, and they have to wait until whatever am to eat again. He is on a vegan diet, so has to take apart his peanut butter sandwich and save the bread to eat as a snack around 8:30 pm, and this is in admin segregation, so they haven't proven anything, and he and the others have been punished in this way for this time and there isn't even any crime or infraction, and his account will also be charged \$10. for his incident, which is money that would pay for my kids lunch, as no one helps me to support him.

Luckily, (sob) his mother passed away, and left some money for his behalf. I lost everything due to these circumstances. I would love to see some of the responders on this site who speak so cruelly to be placed in similar conditions for the almost three years my husband has needlessly suffered, and see how long they would last in Central, Taylorsville, and now Marion.

I will gladly look on this site for help, and plan to start a separate blog, myself.

Thank you for the forum opportunity. Be blessed, Rochelle Long

I am amazed at the ignorance that people choose to portray. Not everyone in prison is actually guilty. Others time was not worthy of the crime. Many others did commit horrible acts because they received horrible trauma and need deep, lengthy psychological and spiritual help.

My husband is a victim of racial profiling, as well as other false claims, and never had a prior, and has been sentenced to over 100 years, with no evidence, but actually information to show his innocence. Three organizations are currently previewing his joke of a trial, where the jury was threatened for not making a unanimous verdict, and I was threatened with jail time if I testified on his behalf.

I was on the site looking for help because currently he and five other inmates have been locked in solitary since August 31 because they dared to complain about not having having any air in their block for a week. This is at Marion Correctional in Marion, Nc. I am not sure how to receive any info.

Thank you, Rochelle

Only because it was brought up, you don't get 28 years for robbing a drug dealer. You get 28 years for being convicted of;

First degree burglary 1 count

Attempted robbery with a dangerous weapon 1 count

Conspiracy to commit robbery with a dangerous weapon 1 counts

Robbery with a dangerous weapon 3 counts

Second degree kidnapping 4 counts

Being identified as a gang member, and committing the referenced crimes with another gang member probably didn't help his case.

In his defense, I see he has only several infractions while in prison.. one of the Strong 8 supporters has over 200. This and other reasons may be why it appears he's no longer at CP.

Prison isn't a fun place for officers or inmates.. Firm but Fair and Show Respect, Get Respect will go a long way towards a calm environment. Be Reasonable is another. With that in mind, does anyone want to suggest how to discipline an inmate that fills a cup with bodily waste and throws it at officers/staff?

Two sides to every story

@Concerned Citizen

Everyone in prison has committed a crime duh, that's how they got there. So in your opinion they should be treated as badly as possible underfed and subjected to being tormented by power hungry officers that lack the basic skills it takes to be policeman or deputy. I'll bet you will also be the same one that is screaming at the top of your lungs when one of the inmates gets pushed too far and snaps the wannabe policeman's neck right? I also bet you are the one that wonders why that after being incarcerated for many years that they have such a hatred for authority and often re-offend. My only hope would be that if they choose to re-offend they choose a worthy victim such as yourself.

This is not about the crimes they committed that caused their incarceration. Yes they committed crimes however they too have rights behind bars. No one should be working for 10 hours a day and be thrown in icon for questioning the unfair treatment. I too am a mother of one of the strong 8. Life circumstances change choices and jail is to rehabilitate not just punish. If you are taught to question unfair practices and stand up for yourself you should not be penalized over and over again. They have done their time in ICON and that is by the states standards. If the wardens are crooked they need to be penalized as well. And before we condemn anyone, we need to know all the facts.

I am the mother on one of the Strong 8. My son cares for prisoners rights. He has had a job since he was 13 and worked hard for his family. He is a devoted father and son. Don't always believe what you hear. North Carolina's so called Judicial system needs to be rectified. No one gets 28 years for robbing a drug dealer in Illinois. And check out where the so called victims are now. Some are in jail and the rest are probably dealing to your children. Having your child incarcerated for 28 years is like a loss of a loved one. My parents will never live long enough to see their favorite and oldest grandson. I will never give up on him. I will get him out of prison!!

O.K., let's tell the entire story. The so-called Strong 8 group consists of 3 murderers, 1 rapist, 1 felonious child abuser/drug dealer, 1 child molester, 1 drug dealer and 1 kidnapper.

They all received a trial, were convicted, and sentenced to prison, where if you are in population, you are required to work. They decided to break the rules, and they were all sent to segregation as a result.

But let's let them out of segregation. As a matter of fact, let's let them out of prison entirely. Let's have a demonstration and see if we can get all 8 of them moved in right next to where your kids go to day care/school or where your mothers and fathers live. I will volunteer to

bring the kool-aid and the cupcakes and plenty of noisemakers.

I think I should notify all of the victims of the Strong 8s crimes so we can all show up at 218 N. Graham St. in Chapel Hill and you can ask them how they cope every day over the loss of their loved ones, or how their children are coping with being abused and sexually molested.

Before everyone jumps on the Strong 8 bandwagon, lets let them know exactly who they are supporting. Only fair, right?

Until Every Murderer & Sex Offender is Behind Bars,

For Prisons and the Society that Understands the Need For Them,

A Concerned Citizen That Believes the Strong 8 Are Exactly Where They Need to Be.

The following quote is taken from a recent Harpers Magazine article.

<http://harpers.org/archive/2012/02/0083788>

150 years ago Alexis de Tocqueville. observing how men routinely subjected to such power become accustomed to setting their own will habitually and completely aside; to submit, not only for once, or upon one point, but in every respect and at all times. Not only, therefore, does this union of power subdue them compulsorily, but it affects their ordinary habits; it isolates them, and then influences each separately.

And so our new masters administer us in America today. They use their great nation-spanning and world-spanning corporations to isolate us as individuals, and then to pit us against our neighbors. They capture and hide away the information that until recently spilled from our open markets. And so they shatter our ability to speak coherently to one another from a base of common experience, to process even the most rudimentary of economic and political facts.

To step outside the open market is to step outside the rule of law and to come under the rule of whim. To step outside the open market is to step outside the rule of reason and to enter a realm of nonsense. We have a choice in America today. We must learn how to make real markets once again or bend our knees, perhaps forever.

These same type of tactics are exemplified in this case, after all, we are talking about labor.

Wow words dont adequately describe gut reaction this.

Just imagine how often this would happen behind closed doors if CCA gets their way and contracts out privatized prisons in 48 states.

I just published a book called Underdog, The Pelican Bay Hunger Strike. After 10 years in prison on drug charges I now illuminate the community about some of the flaws in our justice system through novels.

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