

Solitary Watch

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://solitarywatch.org/2013/01/09/voices-from-solitary-thats-the-only-mail-i-get/>

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by [Voices from Solitary](#) | January 9, 2013

The following was written a few days before Christmas by aman, now in his fifties, who has been in prison for 26 years. He wrote this in response to receiving a holiday card and note from Solitary Watch.

To help us keep in touch with people in solitary confinement throughout the year, please consider a donation to our [Lifelines to Solitary](#) project. (Even \$10 allows us to keep in touch with someone in isolation for a full year.) Our kickstarter runs out in just six days, and from now through January 15, a generous donor (who prefers to remain anonymous) has pledged to match all donations, up to \$500.

To make a donation, please follow [this link](#). Thank you for your support! Jean Casella and James Ridgeway

Thank you for replying. I was surprised when they called mail call and they called my name. I never receive any mail except once a month, one letter a month from my mom, shes barely able to write Best if you take me serious, and not pull my leg. Please dont take mewrong and no pun intended. It is just over the years Ive wrote hundreds of different groups and a lot of big ministries and nobody has ever wrote to me. I used to trade my food trays for stamps and envelopes but nobody wants to help or cares

Heck, we stay locked in for 22 out of 24 hours in this cold concrete and steel. They wont give us winter clothes. The jacket they hand out you can see through it. Our food is brought to us and it is always ice cold, most of the time straight out of the freezer and its left overs and most of the time the loaf meat they give us is raw and stinks. On Thanksgiving we had peanut butter sandwich with meat sandwich and a pack of cookies There were lots of us hungry that night. And its coming again Christmas and New Years. I dread it. The wardens here are big and fat. Well be locked down most of Christmas day. Because they have a Christmas party for the officers. You can smell the food cooking.

Anyways my friend, this life is and has got old. Tomorrow brings nothing but the same thing and at my age, well, who wants to see tomorrow. A human has to have something to hold on to or they lose all hope. And this old body is getting hard to even move around. Ive got arthritis so bad it hurts to just move from this cold air. I am sorry I dont have a Christmas card to send you. You have a Merry Christmas up there in Washington and thank you for writing. Thats the only mail I get

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

by [Voices from Solitary](#)

September 19, 2022

by [Voices from Solitary](#)

September 6, 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.

This torture and abuse must stop. We must continue to shed light on these walled off systems where accountability and oversight are absent. Thank you for sharing this story. Thank you for your endless work to bring an end to solitary here in the U.S.

The one I was talking about is Utah State. The link I provided below is what my dad submitted, and just a portion of the horrors hes written to me about.

Name these prisons people! As a family member of an inmate we have more power collectively than alone. Do not tolerate this behavior from prisons and their employees.

Fantastic post, thank you for sharing this. I also write prisoners across the USA, stories like this are the reason I write. If this gentleman would like a free ad on a penpal site *please* let me know his details and Ill write him about it!

I write 11 prisoners w/o any help cant get any. and I am their only cards and letters throughout the year. I have been hand making cards for years and use this ability to brighten their days. i am their only glimpse of a real person. To them the COs are not people, So cards pictures of me and my family, each prison is different in their rules some I can send puzzles others no, Im on a fixed income w/ an unsuccessful card business I do not solicit donations I simply w/in my means give. I encourage everyone to do this for the price of a stamp its priceless to a prisoner to hear their name called at Mail. Means they are not forgotten

Ive gotten SO many cards back that Ive sent my dad. Ive saved them all in hopes that one day I can still get them to him. Ive gotten to the point where Im almost scared to send a card, because the heartbreak when it gets returned is becoming too much to bear. Each holiday season they seem to find a way to prevent him from communicating with family. Once they even transferred him- he spent well over a month on the road as they dropped others off.

I am writing to two inmates, the staff working at mail or wardens whoever, are looking for every excuse not to give them my letters. I sent them christmas cards with with no contraband the only thing Ive done was to close the envelope with tape because the glue that paste the envelope close kept opening. They sent that card back stating no tape allow. All they could have done were just to tear the tape off. Talk about being in th festive spirits.

P.O. Box 11374
Washington, DC 20008

info@solitarywatch.org

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Solitary Watch News