

Solitary Watch

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://solitarywatch.org/2013/05/13/voices-from-solitary-extradition/>

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by [Voices from Solitary](#) | May 13, 2013

Today we arrive in London, where on Thursday we will speak at a forum entitled [Extradited to a Future of Torture: The Reality of Solitary Confinement in America](#). Hosted by the International State Crimes Initiative (ISCI) at Kings College London, the event features the premiere of a film made by the Yale Visual Law Project, [The Worst of the Worst](#), about Northern Correctional Institution, Connecticut's supermax prison. It will also include talks by Tessa Murphy of Amnesty International and Hamja Ahsan, the brother of Talha Ahsan, a young British national who is currently being held in pre-trial solitary confinement at Northern. Talha Ahsan is one of five UK residents extradited last year to the United States to face terrorism-related charges. The story of their extraditions was not big news in the United States (though we covered it on Solitary Watch, [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#)). In the UK, however, it was a huge and controversial story involving inside British politics and the European Court of Human Rights. The story of the extraditions and particularly, of Talha Ahsan, who suffers from Asperger's Syndrome and is accused under vague material support charges of participating in a jihadist website is told in dramatic detail by the ISCI's Ian Patel in a recent New Statesman article, [The Impossible Injustice of Talha Ahsan's Extradition and Detention](#), which deserves to be read in full.

Talha Ahsan is a poet who has continued to write throughout his imprisonment. The following poem was composed while he was being held in (comparatively unrestrictive) detention in Her Majesty's Prison Long Lartin. It refers to ADX Florence federal supermax prison in Colorado, which is where Ahsan, with good reason, fears he will end up. Jean Casella and James Ridgeway

.....

Five years ago they brought me to a cell
and ever since a waiting game plays here.
As they decide on sending me away,
my parents grow so grey and sad at home.
How will they manage visiting me there
or must they wait until the end of time?
Ma, hear my oath, by him whose hand is time,
bars stand in worship with me in this cell.
So even if I'm extradited there
and taken from my humble parents here,
then tell them paradise is our true home
whose gardens years will never fade away.
To Florence prison I'll be sent away
It doesn't matter what will be my time.
No prison ever can be called my home,
how ever long they put me in a cell.

A higher power occupies me here
whos closer to me even over there.
Perhaps theyll clean their hands of me once there.
And then my country feels Im wiped away.
Though germs stay always floating from me here:
these particles will gather born in time,
a culture breeding from a tiny cell,
to carry on infecting every home.
Theresa May, a minister at home
though feeble servant to her masters there;
a solitary torture chamber cell,
To put me in, shell simply say, Away!
So let me while I can devote my time
to work for my own justice over here.
I pitch a tent for battle waiting here.
And in this heart of mine youll find a home,
free from the crumbling effects of time
or any rotting thoughts of being there.
It is a sin for me to run away
As patience brings my glory to this cell.
For time will be a brief sojourning here,
and there, or anywhere I make a home
Away! A caravan escapes my cell.

HMP Long Lartin, 19 July 2011

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](#)

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September 6, 2022

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