

Solitary Watch

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://solitarywatch.org/2012/12/13/mentally-ill-utah-prisoner-sentenced-to-20-days-in-solitary-for-not-moving-cup-fast-enough/>

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



Utah State Prison in Draper, Utah currently holds over 91 prisoners in solitary confinement in the Uinta One facility. Prisoners have described the facility as [a place of pain and terror](#) and a place where inmates [expect tragedy](#).

While Utah Department of Corrections admits that the facility on occasion houses prisoners diagnosed as mentally ill, they point to the existence of the prisons Olympus Mental Health Forensic Facility.

According to the Utah Department of Corrections website:

Prisons and jails have become primary mental health care providers for mentally ill offenders in the criminal justice system. The mental health services provided by the Utah Department of Corrections is comprehensive and wide-ranging in its scope. Our mission is to provide comprehensive and cost-effective mental health treatment to those offenders who suffer from a serious mental illness.

The Clinical Services Bureau manages a 155-bed stand-alone housing unit for offenders with the most severe mental illnesses. This facility is designated to provide a therapeutic environment that promotes appropriate stabilization and behavioral change.

Solitary Watch has been in contact with an individual in the Olympus facility. In his late 50s, he has been routinely transferred between Uinta One and Olympus for a decade. His medical documents indicate diagnoses for Paranoid States (Delusional Disorders) Other and Unspecified Protein-Calorie Malnutrition Self-inflicted Injury By Cutting and Piercing Instrument and other health issues. He reports constant harassment by the guards, who he says, among other things, falsely accused him of rules violations. In support of this, he provided documentation indicating that he was accused of a charge of Abuse/Misuse Medications based on Some Evidence. He was ultimately found not guilty of the charge, despite not participating in the Disciplinary Hearing.

When people do wicked things to you and you complain, that isn't paranoia, it's circumstance driven. When you refuse to trust those whose conduct does not improve, that's not paranoia. Its recognition of active unremitting threat, the prisoner writes. He reports having been placed in a wheelchair and being upended onto my face when the guard pushing the wheelchair made a typical fast hard turn. After the incident, he received No apology from anyone whatsoever I was told to wait until a nurse came to check on me back in this cage I sat unmoving. I couldn't get off the chair and on the bed My ears are ringing incessantly I can't sleep more than two-hours My eyes aren't properly focusing, he reports.

A month before this, he was found guilty of Refuse Order (see image), because he did not fully and immediately[sic] comply with an order to remove an empty cup and hand from the cuff slider. When chastised for his behavior, according to the report, he was disrespectful to

the staff. For this, he was ordered to 20 days in Punitive Isolation and assessed a \$150 fine.

When asked to provide the policies that guide such punitive measures, Department Spokesman Stephen Gehrke was unaware that such policies are in writing. Im not aware whether there is some sort of document or guideline that lists offenses and punishments or repercussions on a case-by-case basis. I believe the response to each incident is specific to the individual details of each circumstance and takes into account aggravating or mitigating factors, which is why the prison employs hearing officers to listen to the offenders account, review documents, and take into account all other forms of information, he wrote via email.

This is prison medicine we don't care and we don't have to!, the prisoner in Olympus characterizes the approach of the prison's medical officials.

This kind of treatment of people in prison is all too common in the United States. A 2003 Human Rights Watch [report](#) estimated that one-third to one-half of individuals in American isolation units were diagnosed with a mental health problem. As of [September 2011](#), one-third of Virginia's Red Onion State Prison supermax population had a mental health diagnosis. The individual in Olympus is among many in isolation units who attempt suicide while in solitary confinement. [In 2006](#), it was noted that in California and Texas, suicides in prison disproportionately occurred in solitary confinement units.

Click [here](#) to read more of Solitary Watch's reporting on Utah's use of solitary confinement.

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

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I didn't understand that people could be fined for getting a misconduct in prison. That's insane!

I want to correct my post above.

After the Santa Claus killer survived the stab wound to his neck that had been inflicted by Sister Jude in self defense Sister Jude awoke in restraints to hear her attacker testify that he saw her kill Frank the security guard. Actually the guard had been killed by the possessed Sister Mary Eunice in front of the Santa's solitary cell. She then released him to attack Sister Jude who was the one that had placed him in solitary.

To her horror all Sister Jude's former staff either intentionally conspired against her or honestly reported on her crazy behavior. Thus she is now an involuntary patient.

Kind of like being validated by someone attempting to gain his release from solitary huh.

There is limited information with regard to how many mentally ill offenders are in solitary and in prisons across the country. I've researched the mentally ill offender population extensively and have a difficult time finding up-to-date statistics and detailed information about confinement conditions. Bringing these stories to light is important work that you are doing.

What has happened to this person amounts to cruel and unusual punishment, plus harassment, the staff should be looked into through an investigative agency. It is unacceptable to treat anyone like this because of assumed power.

The last American Horror Story Asylum episode The Coat Hanger was poetic justice.

Following the killer Santa's attack on Sister Jude, (the ex-head of the asylum), she finds herself tied up to a bed, with her head fixed into place by a metal brace. As it turns out, the psycho Santa survived the stab to his throat inflicted by Sister Jude in self defense and now she has been framed for slitting the throat of Frank the security guard which had actually been done by the psycho Santa. Therefore, Jude is now a patient at Briarcliff, something she probably never imagined being. The creepiest moment is when the killer is brought in by the Monsignor to tell the sister that he forgives her. That was some great acting on both parts, even though it was mostly dialogue-free with him kissing her on the forehead.

The reversals of roles was most satisfying to watch as the sister who has earlier falsely imprisoned others and used her power to torture them with shock treatments and forced sterilization is unable to successfully defend herself against the false charges.

May there be true justice.

Last Christmas a prisoner in WI, I told him to write you guys, his cellie left and left behind female nude pictures, A CO saw the pictures shackled Ron w/o due process, belly chained he spent the next month in a freezing cold cell cold water showers and an abscessed tooth flipping outrageous the reason people get throw into seg

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