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Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

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Our Weekly Roundup of News and Views on Solitary Confinement

by [Aviva Stahl](#) | September 25, 2016

[The LA Times](#) published an in-depth look into the use of solitary confinement at the Mens Central Jail, including efforts to reduce the use of isolation. Dominic Walker, who was in solitary confinement at the jail for three years, said it makes you feel like nobody. Im here, the walls are closing in. It makes you hallucinate.

A former DC Metro police officer says he is [experiencing severe mental and physical trauma](#) as a result of being held in solitary confinement in an Alexandria jail. Nicholas Young, 36, has been held in isolation since mid-August after being arrested for allegedly aiding the Islamic State.

Whistleblower Chelsea Manning was [sentenced to 14 days in solitary confinement](#) as punishment for her July suicide attempt. I am feeling hurt. I am feeling lonely. I am embarrassed by the decision. I dont know how to explain it, she said in a statement released by the group Fight for the Future.

What has been called the largest prison work strike in US history entered its third week, with as many as 20,000 prisoners on strike, according to the Incarcerated Workers Organizing Committee. [Democracy Now](#) reported that there have been lockdowns in several facilities and that some key organizers were placed in solitary confinement.

A federal judge in Pennsylvania has ordered that 64-year old Arthur Johnson be [immediately released](#) from solitary confinement. Johnson has spent the last 37 years in complete isolation.

The New York Civil Liberties Union has [filed a federal lawsuit](#) to challenge the placement of children in solitary confinement at Syracuse Jail. The children are sexually harassed by adults, housed in disgusting conditions, denied education and, in some cases, pushed to contemplating suicide, [said NYLCU](#). Children are routinely sent to solitary for offenses such as speaking loudly, wearing the wrong shoes or for no other reason than the sadistic pleasure of guards.

A man who went on a shooting spree in West Philadelphia, and was eventually killed by the police, had spent time in solitary confinement in the past, according to news outlet [NBC10](#) an experience which reportedly affected his mental health. I remember visiting him frequently [in jail], said the attorney for Nicholas Glenn, and he had to be pulled out of solitary, and I remember he was having a very difficult time in dealing with the solitary confinement. Glenn killed one woman was killed and wounded several others earlier this month.

A woman in Washington has [filed a wrongful death](#) suit against Whatcom County, alleging that her daughters suicide could have been prevented. Shannon Rose Jefferson had been in solitary confinement in the Whatcom County Jail for about two weeks before she killed herself. The lawsuit states that Jefferson, a tribal member of the Lummi Nation, failed to receive a mental health screening or appropriate treatment for her mental health issues.

Aviva Stahl is a Brooklyn-based reporter who writes about science/health at the intersection of mass incarceration, national security, and trans rights. Shes written for the New York Times, Wired, BuzzFeed News, Solitary Watch, and other outlets. Find her [@stahlidarity](#) and at [stahlidarity.com](#).

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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