

Solitary Watch

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

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by [Mirilla Zhu](#)

October 26, 2022

New from Solitary Watch: On October 27 at 8pm ET, Unlock the Box will host a virtual reading from the 2016 book *Hell Is a Very Small Place: Voices from Solitary Confinement*, edited by Solitary Watch staff, on Facebook and Instagram Live. The event will feature advocates and survivors of solitary, who will read []

by [Juan Moreno Haines](#)

October 25, 2022

This op-ed by Solitary Watch Contributing Writer Juan Moreno Haines appeared yesterday in the Los Angeles Times. Advocates almost succeeded this year in curbing the use of solitary confinement in Californias prisons and jails. The California Mandela Act, named after the long-imprisoned South African president, received the support it needed in August to pass the []

by [Caitlin Konya](#)

October 19, 2022

New from Solitary Watch: Angela Hattery and Earl Smith share an excerpt from their groundbreaking new book *Way Down in the Hole: Race, Intimacy and the Reproduction of Racial Ideologies in Solitary Confinement*. In this book, Hattery and Smith reveal the ways in which the structure of solitary confinement produces and fuels the conditions of []

by [Solitary Watch Guest Author](#)

October 13, 2022

What follows is an excerpt from the groundbreaking new book *Way Down in the Hole: Race, Intimacy and the Reproduction of Racial Ideologies in Solitary Confinement*, by Angela J. Hattery and Earl Smith, with a foreword by Dr. Terry Kupers. *Way Down in the Hole* is the twelfth book authored by Hattery and Smith, professors []

by [Mirilla Zhu](#)

October 12, 2022

The Marshall Project reports that Alabama prisons are in deadly disarray one week into a work strike organized by incarcerated people. Two men have been stabbed to death since the strike began, and one man was allegedly beaten by guards and put in solitary confinement for his role in exposing the strike. Last week, []

Each week, receive an email with our latest original reporting, plus a curated set of links to the best and most important new work on solitary confinement from around the web.

Once a month, we'll also look at larger trends and explore ideas about the punishment paradigm that sustains solitary and growing efforts to challenge it.

by [Caitlin Konya](#)

October 5, 2022

New this week from Solitary Watch: In an essay in our *Voices from Solitary* series, Cesar Villa offers a searing account of living in prolonged solitary confinement in a Security Housing Unit, or SHU, at Californias notorious Pelican Bay State Prison. Were only here to die. The prison administration is paid to put us down. []

by [Voices from Solitary](#)

September 30, 2022

Last night California Governor Gavin Newsom vetoed the bill known as the California Mandela Act (AB-2632), which had been passed by both houses of the state legislature. If signed into law, the legislation would have limited solitary confinement to 15 days and banned it altogether for vulnerable individuals in state prisons, local jails, and private []

by [Vaidya Gullapalli](#)

September 29, 2022

In 2010, the human rights lawyer Juan Mndez was appointed UN Special Rapporteur on Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. To many people in the United States, despite the domestic history of torture, the word carries associations with faraway places and despotic regimes. But Mndez, who was himself tortured in his []

by [Mirilla Zhu](#)

September 28, 2022

TIME reports that the Department of Justice undercounted nearly 1,000 deaths in United States prisons and jails during the last fiscal year. At a congressional hearing on the matter, Vanessa Fano testified about how her brother Jonathan died by suicide in 2017 after being placed in an isolation cell in East Baton Rouge Parish []

by [Caitlin Konya](#)

September 22, 2022

New this week from Solitary Watch: Type Investigations and The American Prospect published an investigation by Solitary Watch contributing writers Katie Rose Quandt and Juan Moreno Haines. Quandt and Haines investigated San Quentin State Prisons continued use of its infamous Adjustment Center, a death row unit designed for solitary confinement, to house people who have []

by [Juan Moreno Haines and Katie Rose Quandt](#)

September 19, 2022

Today, Type Investigations and The American Prospect published an investigation by Solitary Watch contributing writers Katie Rose Quandt and Juan Moreno Haines. Quandt and Haines investigated San Quentin State Prisons continued use of its infamous Adjustment Center, a death row unit designed for solitary confinement, to house people who have contracted or been exposed to []

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September 19, 2022

Mathew Davis is in prison at the Western Illinois Correctional Center, where he is serving a life sentence. He was first incarcerated nearly two decades ago, in 2004, when he was 24. He is now 42. Davis previously wrote for Solitary Watch about his experience surviving extreme isolation in prison. His past writings can also be []

by [Mirilla Zhu](#)

September 14, 2022

New this week from Solitary Watch: Solitary Watch has released a new fact sheet that documents the collateral consequences of solitary confinement. According to the fact sheet, these consequences include the destruction of family relationships, lasting financial hardship, exclusion from work and educational programing, additional time behind bars, increased recidivism, and even shortened life []

by [Jean Casella](#)

September 13, 2022

Today, Solitary Watch is publishing the second in a new series of fact sheets offering facts, analysis, and resources on a variety of topics related to solitary confinement in U.S. prisons, jails, and immigrant and juvenile facilities. This fact sheet, written by by Annalena Wolke, covers the seldom-addressed collateral consequences of solitary. As the fact []

by [Caitlin Konya](#)

September 8, 2022

An editorial in Tuesdays Washington Post carries the headline: Solitary confinement is torture. U.S. prisons should stop using it. Citing

solitary's devastating psychological harms, the piece notes that progress in reducing solitary is encouraging but piecemeal and would benefit from federal leadership from the White House. To date, the piece is the strongest statement against solitary []

by [Voices from Solitary](#)

September 6, 2022

As millions of students across the country return to school, we are republishing this piece on what books mean to people living in solitary confinement. It originally came to us via the Real Cost of Prisons Project, which maintains an outstanding collection of Writing from Prison. The author is Joseph Stanwick, who sadly, passed in a []

by [Mirilla Zhu](#)

August 31, 2022

The California state Senate has passed a bill banning the use of long-term solitary confinement in prisons, jails, and private detention centers, reports KTVU in Sacramento. Under the California Mandela Act, AB 2632 (named for the UN's Mandela Rules on the treatment of incarcerated persons), solitary confinement is limited to no more than []

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 [Caitlin Konya](#)

August 24, 2022

New this week from Solitary Watch: The KPFA radio show and podcast Law and Disorder featured a segment based on an article by Victoria Law published last week by Solitary Watch in partnership with The Nation. In the segment, Law talks about her piece, titled These Labor Unions Are Fighting to Keep Solitary Confinement, which []

by [Mirilla Zhu](#)

August 17, 2022

New this week from Solitary Watch: In an article co-published by Solitary Watch and The Nation, Victoria Law looks at how many correctional officers unions are pushing back against prison reforms, including new laws restricting the use of solitary confinement. She focuses on New York, where the state correctional officers union, NYSCOB, has mounted []

by [Victoria Law](#)

August 16, 2022

Photo: Alicia Barraza, whose 21-year-old son died by suicide while held in solitary confinement, speaks to other advocates gathered in the New York State Capitol in 2020 to lobby state legislators to pass the HALT Solitary Confinement Act. (Courtesy of the #HALTsolitary campaign.) This article is co-published with The Nation. On February 13, at Wende []

by [Voices from Solitary](#)

August 12, 2022

The following essay was written by Edee Allynnah Davis, a 61-year-old trans woman previously incarcerated in the Clements Unit, a men's maximum-security prison in Amarillo, Texas. She recounts her experience in the Program for the Aggressive Mentally Ill Offender (PAMIO), a step-down program for people in administrative segregation, a form of solitary confinement. Though the []

by [Roxanne Barnes and Jean Casella](#)

August 11, 2022

New this week from Solitary Watch: The latest in our series of monthly dispatches, The Word from Solitary Watch, explores depictions of solitary confinement and its myriad harms through film, theater, visual art, and writing. It features the newly released short film Tuesday Afternoon, selected as an Op Doc by the New York Times, which []

by [Jean Casella](#)

August 3, 2022

One week ago, the New York Times featured as its weekly Op Doc a short film called Tuesday Afternoon, directed by Pete Quandt and co-produced by Solitary Watch. It follows Jack Powers who spent 33 years in federal prison for bank robbery on his first day in the free world, traveling from a prison in Pennsylvania to a halfway house in []

by [Roxanne Barnes](#)

August 3, 2022

New this week from Solitary Watch: The Arkansas Department of Corrections has secured \$75 million to add new 458 prison beds, partially funded through unused federal COVID-19 funds, reports Katie Rose Quandt. Anti-mass-incarceration organization Decarcerate insists, when we no longer hold those too poor to buy their freedom, address the failure to appear in a []

by [Katie Rose Quandt](#)

July 27, 2022

After years of unsuccessful attempts to secure funding, the Arkansas Department of Corrections (ADC) recently obtained the go-ahead to add more beds to the states prison system. In March, state lawmakers passed legislation dedicating \$75 million to add 498 high-security beds to the North Central Unit, a mens prison in Calico Rock. Advocates like those []

by [Roxanne Barnes](#)

July 21, 2022

The BOX is billed as an immersive and transformative theater experience that takes audiences inside a solitary confinement unit in a U.S. prison. The End of Isolation Tour is bringing the play to ten venues across the country this summer, with cast and crew traveling in a converted school bus. It is intended as a []

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