

# Solitary Watch

## Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

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by [James Ridgeway and Jean Casella](#) | December 29, 2011

Dear Friends,

Solitary Watch needs your help this holiday season. In order to continue bringing you the ongoing, in-depth coverage you rely upon from this site, we need the support of our readers. We know how much you value Solitary Watch and its work exposing human rights violations, especially the abuse of solitary confinement, in the American prison system. Please make a donation today to help Solitary Watch continue carrying out the important investigative journalism you know and trust.

Over the past year, Solitary Watch brought you up-to-the-minute coverage of the hunger strikes by inmates at the Pelican Bay supermax prison. Its articles on the Rikers Island prisoners left behind during Hurricane Irene were read by more than 200,000 people in two days. Its reporting has been cited in news outlets around the world, including *Time*, *Newsweek*, *The Washington Post*, *New York Magazine*, *The Village Voice*, WNYC, Huffington Post, Alternet, Counterpunch, Truthout, Truthdig, *The Guardian*, *The Daily Mail*, *Le Monde*, *Le Nouvel Observateur*, *Der Spiegel*, and Al Jazeera. Please show that you care about these issues and you want them to remain a part of the conversation in our country.

Although Solitary Watch is largely a volunteer effort, many expenses still exist for this site. There are substantial operating costs involved in providing nationwide coverage, including travel, equipment, and technology costs. We must also cover the cost of postage and printing for the hundreds of printed copies of the newsletter we mail to prisoners throughout the US free of charge. Our readers are a vital source of financial support for Solitary Watch and we need your help to keep it thriving.

Across the country, more and more people are raising their voices against solitary confinement. The UN Special Rapporteur on Torture recently declared prolonged solitary confinement to be a form of torture and called on member nations, including the United States, to prohibit this cruel, inhuman practice. In November, American hiker Sarah Shourd, who spent 482 days in an Iranian prison, published a *New York Times* op-ed demanding an end to solitary confinement in the United States. Raise your voice by showing your support for Solitary Watch today.

We can bring the practice of solitary confinement, and all human rights abuses against prisoners, out of the shadows and into the light of the public square. But we need your help to do it.

Donations can be made online [here](#) or by sending a check to Solitary Watch, c/o Community Futures Collective, 221 Idora Avenue, Vallejo, CA 94591. If your donation is received by December 31, 2011, you can deduct the full amount on your 2011 tax return. For questions about making a contribution, please write to Jean Casella at: [casellaj4@gmail.com](mailto:casellaj4@gmail.com).

We thank you for your generosity and for standing up for the human rights of prisoners.

With warmest wishes for the new year,

James Ridgeway and Jean Casella, Co-Directors

James Ridgeway (1936-2021) was the founder and co-director of Solitary Watch. An investigative journalist for over 60 years, he served as Washington Correspondent for the Village Voice and Mother Jones, reporting domestically on subjects ranging from electoral politics to corporate malfeasance to the rise of the racist far-right, and abroad from Central America, Northern Ireland, Eastern Europe, Haiti, and the former Yugoslavia. Earlier, he wrote for The New Republic and Ramparts, and his work appeared in dozens of other publications. He was the co-director of two films and author of 20 books, including a forthcoming posthumous edition of his groundbreaking 1991 work on the far right, *Blood in the Face*. Jean Casella is the director of Solitary Watch. She has also published work in The Guardian, The Nation, and Mother Jones, and is co-editor of the book *Hell Is a Very Small Place: Voices from Solitary Confinement*. She has received a Soros Justice Media Fellowship and an Alicia Patterson Fellowship. She tweets @solitarywatch.

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 [Jean Casella](#)

December 29, 2021

by [Jean Casella](#)

December 23, 2021

by [Events and Announcements](#)

December 3, 2021

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Solitary Watch

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