

# Solitary Watch

## Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://solitarywatch.org/2013/08/21/voices-from-solitary-everyone-needs-a-friend/>

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by [Voices from Solitary](#) | August 21, 2013

*The following was written by Ricky Silva, 33, who is currently serving a life sentence at Florida State Prison, where he has spent almost four years in solitary confinement held in close management. He writes, I even agree with my prison sentence I dont hold it against anyone who feels I got what I should get But to someone else I might be a person who is need of human contact to prevent insanity.*

*The following entry comes from Silvas blog, [Concrete Cage](#), which is maintained by a friend on the outside who periodically forwards reader comments to Silva. He can also be reached by email at [ricky.lee.silva \[at\] gmail \[dot\] com](mailto:ricky.lee.silva[at]gmail[dot]com) or by writing Ricky Silva, L24722, Florida State Prison, 7819 N.W. 228th Street, Raiford, FL 32026-1000. Lisa Dawson*

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### EVERYONE NEEDS A FRIEND

My backs to the wall but still I will fight  
without saying Im wrong or believing Im right.  
I could live an illusion or even pretend  
that I dont want or need any type of friend.

Do I deserve friends? Who am I to say?  
Everyone would have a friend, if I had it my way.  
Should a man suffer for his wrongs? I believe so  
but what that suffering would be, I dont rightly know.

Should they hang me upside down by the tips of my toes?  
Should they beat me half to death with a length of rubber hose?  
Or should they lock me in a cell and deprive whats called my mind,  
just throw away the key until the end of time?

I am without a doubt no angel, that we know for sure.  
Many of my past actions were evil true and pure.  
I make no excuses, my crimes I wont dismiss  
but I dont believe anyone could possibly deserve this.

To feel so alone at times that you dont wish to go on.  
To constantly reach out for contact and for no one to respond.  
To suffer every day with only yourself to blame.  
To know the way your mind works will never be the same.

After years in solitary the world sort of drifts away,  
your past comes back to haunt you and is stuck on replay.  
You begin to hate yourself for all the pain you have caused.  
I have struggled for years and now my life is on pause.

I understand how many people would feel, Im just a piece of shit,  
that if my life is total hell, Im the one who done it.  
And if Im honest with myself, I would have to agree  
but everyone needs a friend and that includes me!!!

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](#)

September 30, 2022

by [Voices from Solitary](#)

September 19, 2022

by [Voices from Solitary](#)

September 6, 2022

Solitary Watch encourages comments and welcomes a range of ideas, opinions, debates, and respectful disagreement. We do not allow name-calling, bullying, cursing, or personal attacks of any kind. Any embedded links should be to information relevant to the conversation. Comments that violate these guidelines will be removed, and repeat offenders will be blocked. Thank you for your cooperation.

Ricky, your pen-friendship has enriched my life! How lovely to get up in morn and find your letter! Really. For anyone reading this: use your passion for human rights to take direct action by writing a letter of support to our pals who suffer in solitary.

You dont have to give address. But you might gain a lovely friend!!

Ricky Im glad you accepted my invite of pen-friendship. You wont be left alone and forgotten. Anyone can appreciate thats got to be a big worry.

I need to be reliable and consistent for Ricky. But you can send a one-off note expressing your support, for any individual.

Awesome to meet you, friend.

Love poetry. Cant feel your suffering its too intense but can relate it to when i went into a head-hospital after a breakdown. Thats enuf! Thanx love for your absolute honesty and willingness to accept the wrong things you did. It says SO MUCH about your strength of character. Also on the bigger issue that youll not back down from what you believe is right and true. YOU DO DESERVE FRIENDS YOU DESERVE HUMAN CONTACT. I cry reading ya poems big hugs

Hey, Ricky I really like your poem, man. And Im feeling your pain, and I respect your honesty. Heres the deal people can be idiots, especially people with the power to make huge decisions over other folks lives. The riidiculously high stretches inmates are sentenced to are nothing personal, which is the heart of the problem. These days there is so much desensitization that, whether you are a judge, or a cop, or anyone else with a say in the matter, if you have not done any time yourself, then you are not TRULY qualified to decide a sentence for anyone else. You would have no sense of what you are doing. Time is maybe the most important thing in life, and the quality of how we spend our time in life is the sole purpose for everything we do from the moment we are born. For someone else to rob another of their right to control their own time is an extreme and audacious act. It should only be done in cases of absolute necessity, and then only with the goal of protecting society WHILE educating that person into gaining self-control and taking responsibility for his or her own actions. Sometimes they need extra help. Often crimes are committed accidentally, or with little idea of actual damages. This is correctable. The idea that people should be punished, instead of rehabilitated, is straioght up cruelty. Solitary confinement falls into this category. Our justice system fails inmates terribly. I think you have a good attitude, and I am sorry you are being kept out of society. You could be an excellent source for leading others away from crime. Certainly you have a talent for writing, and could inspire others with your creativity. Your spirit, no matter where your body is being kept, is beautiful. You have touched my heart, and Im thousands of miles away. Rock on, man!

I am going to copy this poem and send it to my friend in Pelican Bay State Prison in California. He is an artist, and I post things for him on his website. For the purposes of replying to this post, Ill switch to his website so you can cick on my name and see the amazing art he does in a maximum security prison.

yes u r who u r but u r a person and only u can love ur self and u have someone who cares and thats me I can be a friend I feel so bad for u and everyone else who faces this awful trajedy god will come to ur aid seek him first and he will acknowledge u take care and ill b praying for u.. and I hope they get rid of that solitary confinement

Read your post. You do have people who are friends. They are just not with you to touch. Please go back and like yourself first, yes you did wrong, but keeping this guilt is wrong. Your time is your punishment. Not in your mind. Your mind is worth keeping. Stay strong

:( why do they gotta be torchering them why :( they should give them a second chance no one should judge nobody but god only. cops think there bad cause they have a badge LIKE NO REALLY WHO ARE U GUYS TO SAY ANYTHING GOD IS SEEING EVERYTHING AND REMEMBER THE DAY WE ALL LEAVE U FOOLS OF SO CALLED COPS ARE GONA GET JUDGE MY DA MAN UP STAIRS :(

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