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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](#) | July 10, 2016

The Delaware Supreme Court has [reversed a previous ruling](#), in a decision that will land a person who was formally on death row, back in solitary confinement. Isaiah McCoy, 28, is awaiting a new trial after the Supreme Court overturned his conviction. McCoy's lawyers had successfully argued in front of a lower court that his placement in solitary was hindering his ability to contribute to his defense.

A woman has [filed a lawsuit](#) in Otero County, New Mexico, alleging that guards watched and did nothing as her mental health deteriorated while she was in the box. The suit states that Roxanne Estrada, then 22, was kept in isolation for 14 months despite being diagnosed with schizophrenia and against the recommendation of a mental health provider. Court documents allege that Estrada lost fifty pounds while in solitary and became so sick she had to be hospitalized.

New England's [Rainbow Times](#) profiled Black & Pinks efforts to end solitary confinement in Massachusetts prisons and jails. The story profiles several LGBT people who have spent time in isolation in the state.

Solitary Watch's Sarah Shourd was interviewed by radio station [KPFA](#) about her new play, *The Box*, which recently premiered in San Francisco.

According to a [class-action settlement](#) reached in late June, all people incarcerated in Colorado state prisons including those classed at the highest security levels and those in disciplinary segregation will now have access to fresh air and sunlight during recreation. Because of this settlement, inmates will get to feel the sun and wind on their faces. They'll be able to experience things like rain and snow, said Denver attorney Amy Robertson, who represented the plaintiffs.

Incarcerated journalist Barrett Brown wrote a column for [The Intercept](#) detailing his experiences in solitary confinement. He writes, SHU inmates also spend some variable portion of each day reflecting on the astonishing degree of injustice they've had the chance to observe, as well as cultivating a healthy contempt for the system that perpetrates that injustice and the society that continues to permit it.

Supporters of the prisoners on hunger strike in Wisconsin continue to demand [an end to the force-feeding](#) of those who refuse to eat. The state's Department of Corrections is reported to be force-feeding several men, allegedly several times a day.

A New Mexico mother is suing Curry County after her 15-year-old son [spent 11 months in solitary confinement](#) in a juvenile detention center. Kelly Cook has said her son, Christian, was placed in isolation so guards would not have to attend to his mental health needs, which include autism, obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) and attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

Al Jazeera's [The Listening Post](#) profiled Solitary Watch in a segment entitled Letter from the inside Solitary confinement in the US. Co-founder James Ridgeway is interviewed in addition to a number of activists and lawyers working on the issue.

[The New York Times](#) profiled several young people who are still being held in solitary on Rikers Island, despite plans announced in January 2015 to end the use of isolation for people under 22. You take your medication so you just sleep all day, said Kevin Busgith, 21. You talk with your peers, your colleagues. I've been locked up a long time. Lot of colleagues. You've got to be crazy to be in a cell 23 hours a day.

Aviva Stahl is a Brooklyn-based reporter who writes about science/health at the intersection of mass incarceration, national security, and trans rights. She's 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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