

Solitary Watch

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://solitarywatch.org/2013/02/15/utah-supermax-prisoners-report-being-treated-like-an-animal/>

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by [Sal Rodriguez](#) | February 15, 2013

Prisoners at Utah State Prison, Drapers supermax Uinta One facility have reported numerous abuses to Solitary Watch. The Uinta One facility has a design capacity of 96, and is divided into eight sections with twelve cells each, with approximately 90 prisoners currently held in solitary confinement for reasons varying from short-term disciplinary action to protective custody.

Prisoners in Uinta One may receive only 3 hours a week of time out of their cell to shower or exercise alone in a concrete yard. The cells are small, and some are fitted with cameras. The windows on the cell doors are covered by a steel flap that guards routinely peer through. Sand bags line the doors to prevent fishing, or communications being passed from cell to cell, and cell [flooding](#).

Reports prisoner [Brandon Green](#), who has spent five years in Uinta One, Bugs get trapped under these and set up little colonies and infiltrate our cells. Most of these toilets do not flush correctly and most cell toilets stink with green moss inside the bowls. Most air vents are clogged and one can taste the city exhaust smoke as one chews ones carrots.

One prisoner has called Uinta One a [place of pain and terror](#), while [another](#) has commented no wonder there are so many suicides.

Individuals in Uinta One have written Solitary Watch about the frequent use of strip cells as a disciplinary measure and response to suicidal ideation. A strip cell is a cell without anything beyond a concrete bedding area, toilet, and sink. Prisoners in these conditions wear a smock, a tear-resistant gown. (Solitary Watch has previously [reported](#) on the use of strip cells at Utah State Prison.)

L., who spent 33 months in Uinta One in total as of October 2012, told Solitary Watch that if someone is gonna kill themselves they take them and out to a strip cell and you sleep on the hard floor and treated like a dog. A., in protective custody for one year following his decision to leave gang life, reported that if I lose control because of something I have no control over, they'll punish me and put me on strip cell for three days when a mentally ill inmate feels suicidal, they send us to the infirmary to be on suicide watch then we get from suicide watch back to Uinta 1 and the staff put us back in the strip cell when we get back to Uinta 1.

Mental health treatment is reportedly abysmal. Only medication. And nothing else. Its all about money with these people. They charge you money only to see a mental health worker for one or two minutes and they'll walk away and do nothing for you, reports A.

A. has further written that the use of strip cell is for punishment purposes. Otherwise, why would they put someone on strip cell? For simply calling the officers names or an inmate who can't emotionally deal with this place goes on strip cell. When some of us feel suicidal, the officers say Please don't do anything on my shift. Wait until I leave and you can do whatever you want. Their policy states that they must carry themselves in a professional manner, but its ok for them to go against policy, but if we do that its hell to pay and strip cell to see.

Yet another prisoner, held in a different section than A. and L., has reported being placed in on strip cell status 15-20 times across three years in solitary confinement. P., who is currently serving a 15-year prison term for robbery, has spent three years in Uinta One for not listening to officers, a weapons write up, and refusing to move. He is currently held in a less restrictive section of Uinta One, and is allowed more privileges, such as visitation, than prisoners in other sections. He recalls his time in one section as pain and misery, where you get to move to the shower with a dog leash every Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday.

You get only four pairs of socks and underwear, you can only buy stamps, the soap they give you doesn't work, and they use strip cell as a punishment for everything, he writes of his situation.

With regards to strip cells, he writes that the protocol following suicidal ideation is being sent to the infirmary, where prisoners are placed on strip cell as they receive psychiatric attention. They are then returned to Uinta One, where they are placed on strip cell.

For 24 hours you're with a smock to cover your self up, P. writes, You get only 6-12 sheets of toilet paper, depending on the officer.

As others have described, P. reports being treated like an animal. You have to kneel down in the back of your cell to get your white sack thrown on the floor (treated like an animal). But they let you come to the door for pill line or trash call. You have to earn your meals, but

not pills. Go figure.

While on strip cell, if you go 24 hours without a negative event you'll be able to get a mattress. After 24 more hours you'll get your stuff back they throw all your stuff together, clean with dirty clothes, sometimes throw your stuff away.

Like others in Uinta One, he [reports](#) being verbally abused by guards. I've been called a lame bitch, punk, case, worthless, etc. by officers. They threaten you like an animal and when you go off they act like they didn't do nothing.

Solitary Watch will continue to provide updates on Uinta One as information becomes available.

Sal Rodriguez was Solitary Watch's first and most prolific intern. Based in Los Angeles, he served as an editorial writer and columnist for the Orange County Register and the Press-Enterprise, and is now the opinion editor for the Southern California News Group.

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 [Juan Moreno Haines](#)

October 25, 2022

by [Solitary Watch Guest Author](#)

October 13, 2022

by [Vaidya Gullapalli](#)

September 29, 2022

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Well my son has been in this hell hole. He decided to not join the saw gang and they put a hit on him. So they put him in this hell hole for his protection. So when you call them scum and low lifes remember they bare someone children. They are treated Like shit. The guards mentally and physically abuse them. Some have been raped and tortured. My son was there on drug possession charges. He didn't rape or rob anyone. This hell hole needs to be brought to the public attention

You are aware that, since this is the USA, we can change the way it is, right?

They did it to them self. There scum and should be put on a island all together to fend for there self and save the taxpayers there money. I've been in prison in Ga for weed never been in trouble before and got 2 yes we had store call tv and we should have had nothing like that and all I did was smoke weed. If you dont like it dont get into trouble and if you cant do that leave the USA we dont wont your sorry ass in it.

Oh no poor inmates please why they act like there the victim what about the people they rape murders or rob what about there familys that got to suffer so good hope they get treated like crap

I was wondering if the inmates know that people such as this site and others, are fighting for this torture to end? I tend to doubt it but it would be of some comfort to them.

Very sad to hear of this torture chamber as there are many others around the country if you would only look for the symptoms and then find a way to cure this disease. I know how such units suffer from inattention from above creating deliberate indifferences to be established along with a culture that is reckless, arrogant and contemptuous of any rule of law. It will be a matter of time before such placement are either shortened or eliminated but time doesn't stand still and many suffer or die inside these darkened walls of pain. Hoping we can end the practice of prolonged solitary confinement soon and bring back sound correctional practices that are humane and preserve ones dignity and self-respect.

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