

Solitary Watch

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://solitarywatch.org/2013/12/16/lifelines-solitary/>

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by [Jean Casella and James Ridgeway](#) | December 16, 2013

Dear Solitary Watchers:

We approach our readers with an appeal for support only once a year. And even then, we don't ask you to help us with general operating expenses, but rather with a very special part of our work.

All year long, while we are carrying on our research and reporting on the human rights crisis in our midst, Solitary Watch also reaches out directly to hundreds of people who live in extreme isolation in prisons and jails across the country.

We get dozens of letters each week, and try our best to respond to them all. Four times a year we send out a newsletter with selected stories from the website to more than 600 men and women in solitary confinement. And every December we send out a holiday card. This year's card, pictured below, features art by Five Omar Mualimm-ak, a survivor of five years of solitary in New York State prisons.

It is difficult to overstate what an impact these simple missives can have on a person who lives surrounded by gray walls, deprived of all human contact. A colorful card, or a note with a few handwritten words of support, or a newsletter that tells of the growing movement against solitary confinement—all these are acknowledgments of the recipients' humanity, a small sign that they have not been forgotten.

I can't tell you how touched I am for you giving me any attention, one man in a Texas prison wrote to us after receiving our holiday card last year. I am so grateful to you and cried tears reading your card because the torture, abuse and neglect I'm facing makes this cell and my world a lonely place, and many days I think of how to take my own life and end the misery and pain but you inspire me and I continue to fight on.

At the same time, our communications with people in solitary confinement serve another purpose, providing us with a rich source of first-hand information that shapes our reporting on solitary confinement, as well as material for the Voices from Solitary we feature on our site.

That's why every dollar raised in this annual appeal will go directly to our Lifelines to Solitary project. This year, we want to double the reach of our mailings, to at least 1,200 of the tens of thousands of people who live in long-term solitary. That means we need to perform outreach to supermax prisons and solitary confinement units to acquire additional contacts. And once we succeed in doubling our list, our printing and mailing costs will double as well.

Please consider helping us achieve our goals with a donation at any level. To find out more about Lifelines to Solitary and to make a fully tax-deductible online donation, please visit our fundraising page: <http://www.razoo.com/story/Lifelines-To-Solitary-2014>

Thank you for your support, your faith in our work, and your concern for the people who reside in our nation's darkest corners.

With best wishes for the new year,

Jean and Jim



Solitary Watch
wishes you peace, strength and hope,
in this holiday season and
throughout the new year.

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

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.

With the work of God and you both all is possible for all these men and women.. My fiance is at Pelican Bay, I am all new to this but I totally support what you were doing. I read about solitary confinement, Its tough it saddens me and I will totally support you yearly..<3
TO ALL

Thank you for doing the work that nobody else seems able to perform.

Thank you for doing the work nobody else seems capable to carry.

My thoughts and prayers go out to all of you in prison. My son is at Pelican Bay in solitary. please dont give up your flight Thanks
Linda OLeary

Thank you, Linda. Does your son receive our cards and newsletters? Please send his name and number to us at solitarywatchnews@gmail.com and we will add him to our list.

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Solitary Watch News