

Solitary Watch

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://solitarywatch.org/2017/11/28/on-givingtuesday-help-us-extend-a-lifeline-to-people-in-solitary-confinement/>

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All Donations Will Be Doubled for Twice the Impact

by [Jean Casella and James Ridgeway](#) | November 28, 2017

Dear Friends:

Yesterday, we wrote about people living in solitary confinement who found the strength and courage to bring us news from inside a secret world of torment and abuse. We shared with you [a few of their most powerful stories](#) telling what it is like to live for years or decades deprived of all human contact, describing their struggles to maintain sanity and hope in the face of soul-destroying isolation. These stories, more than anything else, have served to break down the walls of silence and indifference that once surrounded the practice of solitary confinement in U.S. prisons and jails.

Today, we want to tell you what we are doing to try to give back just a fraction of what we've received from these brave souls. Through our [Lifelines to Solitary](#) project, Solitary Watch supplies life-affirming and sometimes, life-sustaining human contact and validation to individuals living in extreme isolation. With personalized letters, newsletters, and holiday cards, we keep in touch with more than 5,000 people in solitary across the country. Often, we provide their only connection with the outside world and their only proof that they are not forgotten.

I can't tell you how touched I am for you giving me any attention, one man in solitary confinement in Texas wrote to us. 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.

Three years ago, we also launched a powerful new component of Lifelines to Solitary: the first ever prison correspondence program especially for people in solitary confinement. We have matched up faith communities, student groups, and hundreds of dedicated individuals with pen pals in solitary and learned from people on both sides how profoundly two lives can be changed with a single stamp.

Unlike some other components of our work, the Lifelines to Solitary project receives *no* grant funding, and is completely supported by individual donations. Only with your help can we continue to add new people to our mailing lists, match them up with correspondents on the outside, and bring messages of hope and healing to thousands more men and women living in solitary confinement.

This year, you have the unique opportunity to *see your donation doubled*, thanks to the News Match program. All donations up to \$1,000 will be matched in full if received by December 31. Please click on the link below to make your donation online, or learn where to send your check.

This #GivingTuesday, please remember those who live in a world so dark that a single card or letter may be their only connection to humanity. Please support Lifelines to Solitary. Thank you.

[su_button url=https://www.newsmatch.org/organizations/solitary-watch target=blank style=flat background=#2ed992 color=#000000 size=10 center=yes radius=5 icon_color=#000000 class=font-family: Arial !important; font-size: 16px !important; font-weight: bold !important;]Donate Now[/su_button]

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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