

Solitary Watch

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://solitarywatch.org/2017/06/01/solitary-watch-print-edition-reaches-over-5000-people-held-in-solitary-confinement/>

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by [Jean Casella and James Ridgeway](#) | June 1, 2017

About a year after our founding in 2009, when we realized that the shoestring project called Solitary Watch was something that desperately needed to be maintained and expanded over the long term, we also acknowledged a disconcerting truth: Our most important potential readership was also the one group of people who could not access our work.

We needed to find a way to reach people in prison and especially people in solitary confinement. So we began periodically sending out a four-page print edition, with a selection of articles drawn from our website, as well as news briefs on the important stories we did not have the space to include. At first we sent it to a few hundred individuals whose names we had obtained from loved ones on the outside, from advocates, and from a few listings in other newsletters that went to people in prison.

Soon, requests for the print edition began to trickle in from incarcerated men and women who heard about it through shouted or whispered communications, or had it passed to them through the cracks under cell doors. More requests came, on behalf of people in solitary, from family members, friends, and pen pals in the free world. Today, we receive 30 to 50 new requests each week, and our print edition goes out to more than 5,000 incarcerated individuals, nearly all of them living in isolation.

The printing and mailing of the print edition is made possible through the generosity of donors who [support our Lifelines to Solitary project](#).

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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