

# Solitary Watch

## Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://solitarywatch.org/2013/07/18/voices-from-solitary-american-supermax/>

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by [Voices from Solitary](#) | July 18, 2013



*Joseph Dole is serving a life without parole sentence for a conviction that he continues to fight pro se. He was confined in Tamms Supermax Prison for a full decade, from 2002 through 2012, when a court ruling gave him and others at Tamms a due process right to a fair hearing, which allowed him to win a transfer out of Tamms. Tamms would be emptied of prisoners and closed the following year coincidentally, on his birthday. Joseph Dole has written many articles, essays, and research papers that have been published in Prison Legal News, The Journal of Prisoners on Prisons, and other print and online publications. His essay The Meaning of Life (also [reprinted on Solitary Watch](#)) appears in the new anthology Too Cruel, Not Unusual Enough, published by The Other Death Penalty Project. More of his writings can be found at [www.realcostofprisons.org/writing/](http://www.realcostofprisons.org/writing/) (Thanks to Lois Ahrens of the [Real Cost of Prisons Project](#) for forwarding us the following poem.) He can be reached by writing: Joseph Dole, K84446, Stateville Correctional Center, P.O. Box 112, Joliet, IL 60434. Jean Casella*

.....

A guard informed me upon arrival that

there are benefits to this isolation.

He promoted the fact that we are now

all safe from gang retaliation.

I had to ask But what of the

retaliation of the prison administration?

He smiled cryptically as he enjoyed

this in ecstatic contemplation.

None of what I was experiencing was

making me feel safe. But then, by grace,

I see a new definition. Im safe from

my familys loving embrace.

Im safe from having education take

ignorances place.

Im safe from recreation keeping my

hearts healthy pace.

How I wish I could articulate this quasi-

existence that Ive grown to hate.

Or get an answer to why so many strangers

sadistically enjoy my monotonous fate.

They say societal enlightenment takes time, but what if it takes

longer than your life, and youre forced to wait?

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The Voices from Solitary series publishes dispatches from people surviving the lived experience of solitary confinement.

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I support all prisoners at Shu and theirj ustified five core demands. I also hope for the Shu system to be closed down!!!!

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Solitary Watch

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