

Solitary Watch

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://solitarywatch.org/2021/11/17/support-the-future-of-solitary-watch/>

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and Honor the Legacy of Our Founder, James Ridgeway

by [Jean Casella](#) | November 17, 2021

[su_button url=https://www.newsmatch.org/organizations/solitary-watch target=blank style=flat background=#de7002 color=FFFFFF size=10 center=yes radius=5 icon_color=#000000 class=font-family: Arial !important; font-size: 16px !important; font-weight: bold !important;]Your Donations Make Our Work Possible.[/su_button]

Dear Donors, Readers, and Friends:

We are approaching the end of what has been a difficult year for all of us at Solitary Watch. In February, we suffered a devastating internal loss with the sudden passing of James Ridgeway, our founder and co-director.

A few of you were fortunate enough to know Jim personally. Anyone who has visited this site, read his other reporting, or learned about the travesty of solitary confinement which was largely invisible to the public before he made it his life's work has been touched by him. He was the soul and spirit of Solitary Watch, our North Star.

Exposing the torture of solitary confinement was only the latest phase in Jim's [remarkable sixty-year career](#) in investigative journalism. But though he had reported from all over the world and from the seats of power in Washington, he came to believe that it was the most important work he had ever done.

Jim started Solitary Watch in 2009 when he was 73 years old. An age when, as he put it, he was supposed to be driving a golf cart to the early bird special. Instead, as a [2016 piece in the New Yorker](#) described, he pushed his walker to the post office every few days to pick up the dozens of letters written to him by people in solitary confinement. And he always wrote back.

Voices from Solitary, our unique series of first-hand accounts of life in lockdown, grew out of that correspondence. So did our support for incarcerated journalists, for whom Jim had the greatest admiration and respect. ([This tweet](#) was written on the day before his death.) As we move forward without Jim, we've pledged to expand that support, and to hire our first formerly incarcerated staff writer.

But this work can only continue with the support of people like you. Thanks to NewsMatch, your donation will be matched, up to \$1,000 per donation. If you choose to make your gift recur monthly, every one of your donations will be matched.

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We thank you for supporting the work of Solitary Watch, in Jim's memory and in service of the cause we all share.

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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Solitary Watch

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