

Solitary Watch

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

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by [Aviva Stahl](#) | June 22, 2014



The following roundup features noteworthy news, reports and opinions on solitary confinement from the past week that have not been covered in other Solitary Watch posts.

In [The Daily Beast](#), *Solitary Watch* contributor Sarah Shourd explores the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation's recently proposed obscenity regulations, the rules that govern what mail can go into and of the state's prisons and jails. As one interviewee comments, "These prisoners are essentially being punished for trying to alert the media to conditions of extreme solitary confinement inside California's prison."

Bonnie Kerness, director of the Prison Watch program of the American Friends Service Committee, writes about solitary confinement and Torture Awareness Month for [Truth-Out](#).

ABC News Nightline followed Gregg Marcantel, the Secretary of Corrections for New Mexico, as he went undercover to [spend 48 hours in solitary confinement](#). The outlet also published [prison diaries](#) from other individuals in isolation.

In light of the recently released second season of *Orange Is the New Black*, the ACLU published a [blog](#) post on the scariest villain in the prison solitary confinement.

A family in DeKalb County, Missouri, has [filed a lawsuit](#) in the death of Timothy Harris, a 36-year-old who was being held at the DeWitt-DeKalb County Regional Jail pending trial when he passed away. Lawyers for Harris' family allege that he was kept in solitary confinement for twelve days without a toilet, sink or running water.

Motherboard featured [an interview](#) with Raphael Sperry, president of the Architects/Designers/Planners for Social Responsibility (ADPSR). The organization recently launched a crowd-sourcing campaign to get the American Institute of Architects to prohibit the design of spaces that inherently violate human rights in their code of ethics, particularly solitary confinement cells and supermax prisons.

A South Carolina paper, [The Post and Courier](#), published a feature piece on Randy Poindexter, who spent 16 years in solitary confinement in a state facility. His story illustrates the challenges in providing therapeutic care in an underfunded, understaffed correctional system built more for punishment than redemption. It also shows the resiliency of the human spirit and its ability to bounce back from a time when painting the cell walls red with his own blood was the only thing that brought Poindexter peace.

An individual serving a life sentence in connection to the 1998 bombing of the US embassy in Tanzania [has won a federal appeal](#), after the FBI limited his contact to 32 people. He is incarcerated in the supermax facility in Florence, Colorado, and also subject to Special Administrative Measures, which further constrain his communication with the outside world.

A news outlet has [obtained video](#) that follows the last few hours of Christopher Lee Lopez's life, while he is strapped into restraints at the San Carlos Correctional Facility in Pueblo, Colorado. Lopez had recently been removed from solitary confinement after spending nine and a half months in the box; the video shows him having a grand mal seizure in the restraint chair, and prison guards only coming to his

assistance over thirty minutes later. A lawsuit has been filed in federal court.

Aviva Stahl is a Brooklyn-based reporter who writes about science/health at the intersection of mass incarceration, national security, and trans rights. Shes written for the New York Times, Wired, BuzzFeed News, Solitary Watch, and other outlets. Find her @stahlidarity and at stahlidarity.com.

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 [Mirilla Zhu](#)

October 26, 2022

by [Caitlin Konya](#)

October 19, 2022

by [Mirilla Zhu](#)

October 12, 2022

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Done

Jay will you email me so I can exchange info? Its jennybetenson@msn.com

Signed petition. Will share. We have hope dont forget

My fave poet Dylan Thomas For when you feel you you are linesbanging your head against a brick wall dont walk gently into that there dark night Rage, rage against the dying of the light thats for hope. Blessings.

Yep of course will sign. Let me know how; Im in UK is it online? Also if i get an adress Ill send him a direct letter of support or via your email. Got a feelin Im meant to do this too as i can only work from home now which has put a stop to my usual non violent direct action. I can help with amnesty .int. too. My pen pal in the states has been refused his full dose of insulin..as shocking as your sons mal treatment. Im a mum too. I offer you my support Jenny x

Jenny betenson youre a true mother. Dont forget you have friends and supporters here .

<https://www.change.org/petitions/rollin-cook-get-my-son-immediate-access-to-qualified-medical-specialists-who-can-properly-diagnose-and-treat-my-son>

Im hitting roadblocks everywhere I turn, will you please help by signing and sharing my petition?

Thank you so much Jay, I am getting desperate for help and will not stop until my son is helped and every other prisoner is treated with respect and not have their civil rights violated. I will fight this until the day I die. I thought my calling in life was to fight for my special needs kids but I have gotten them everything they are entitled to. Prison reform is obviously where I am meant to be.

The report on Mr.Christopher lee lopez (grand mail seizure in restraint chair/30min for help)has left me particularly nauseated and repulsed. This is because Im severely epileptic which is exasserbated by stress.the utter panic he would have felt during/before/after fitting is almost indescribable, even when people like me have access to medics, essential drugs, reassurance and safety.Mr. lopez had none of this.bless his heart.we have footage i think?its time for these sick people to be shamed,and not just lose their jobs, the system as whole taken notice of by those in high office,THE ONES YOU VOTE FOR.

Im with Jenny. What can we do? How can this be stopped?

Casey: It will be a long, uphill battle, but you can begin by checking our Action page for events and organizations in your state or on the national level that are fighting solitary. You can also alleviate someones suffering by writing to them. The ACLUs Stop Solitary page has information about pending reform legislation that you can support.

I will write to them. I have a son in max in Draper Utah who is let out for one hour every two days. He does have once cellmate and I am currently fighting the prison to save his life because he is 25 with a mass on his tongue, weight loss, and enlarged lymph nodes. The prison has refused to do a biopsy and I have all paperwork to prove deliberate indifference. My fight for the last nine months has shown me that I need and WILL fight wherever I can to make sure this does not happen again. I dont want to take away from your campaign here but if you would allow me to I would like to post my petition on change.org to help save him. If not I will continue to offer support anywhere I can in the name of my son.

I will not stand by and let this happen without trying to do something. We all need to stand up and fight for human rights.

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Solitary Watch News