

Solitary Watch

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://solitarywatch.org/2013/08/19/california-prison-hunger-strikers-to-be-force-fed/>

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by [Jean Casella and James Ridgeway](#) | August 19, 2013

[Robert Lowell](#) called it mans lovely, peculiar power to choose life and diethe ability ofhuman beings to give their lives willingly in service of a cause greater than their individual selves.

But the state of California, with the approval of a federal judge, now has license to deny even this last, most desperate human right to the dozens of men in solitary confinement who are risking death after six full weeks of hunger striking.

As theAssociated Press reports, this afternoon state corrections officials and a federal receiver who controls inmate medical care received blanket authority from U.S. District Judge Thelton Henderson of San Francisco to feed inmates who may be in failing health. The order includes those who recently signed requests that they not be revived [DNRs].

According to the AP, as many as 70 men are in dire condition and may be candidates for force-feeding. They will join the dozens of men at Guantanamo who have been fed for monthsvia tubes forced through theirnoses and down their throatsinto their stomachsa practice that is clearly [in violation](#) of international law.

The state has chosen this course rather than negotiate seriously with the hunger strikers. California Corrections head Jeffrey Beard has [called](#) the 43-day strike a gang power play, although the former gang leaders are among the starving.Governor Jerry Brown stands silent. But presumably they are in agreement with the force-feeding strategy, which will prevent the strikers from becoming martyrs.

Read the full wire service story [here](#).

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 [Juan Moreno Haines](#)

October 25, 2022

by [Solitary Watch Guest Author](#)

October 13, 2022

by [Vaidya Gullapalli](#)

September 29, 2022

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cooperation.

When our basic rights as human beings are taken such as this kind of act, this becomes the beginning of all peoples rights being slowly being robbed of liberty, inside and outside of these prison walls. Every person who remains quite partakes in the in the act, violates human rights. Every person whos hands are actively involved, and continue, will one day find that they themselves have been robbed.

Iliam, This is a pure act of protest, and should be noted as such. That right there says it all, because as inmates, they shouldnt have the right to protest. They lost that right when they committed their crime. They will regain that right once they have paid their debt to society and completed their sentence. If they are in for life, then they will never regain it. Im sorry if that seems harsh or uncivilized to you, but these are harsh uncivilized people for the most part, otherwise they wouldnt be in the situation they are in.

This is a historical event, that WILL go on record, making the government our government look worse than they already do? And good ol Gov jerry brown aint got nuthin to say? WOW? As I have stated many times, in many different places ANIMAL CRUELTY GETS MORE ATTENTION AND BETTER RESULTS!!!

None of this is right! A gang power play, that is the best the powers that be can do? Man are they reachin!!! Most of their top dawg gang members, are out?

The gentlemen participating in the hunger strike are representatives of honor, integrity and most importantly humanity, they need to be given the common courtesy of even a simple negotiation! Not only are their rights as human beings being violated but their legal rights as well!

Bob, Why do you assume their actions are without merit? Solitary confinement is considered by many doctors, psychologists and human rights attorneys as torture. We are a civilised society that should not condone torture, and this is these people who have been made almost entirely powerless, excercising what little power they have left as human beings. This is not bad behaviour, bad behaviour would be setting fire to things, vandalism. This is a pure act of protest, and should be noted as such.

Cruelty has few boundaries, does it?

The state has chosen this course rather than negotiate seriously with the hunger strikers.

There is nothing to negotiate and therefore no choice. Negotiation would only reward and give merit to their actions, and that would only serve to encourage more bad behavior.

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