

Solitary Watch

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://solitarywatch.org/2013/04/11/the-louder-my-voice-the-deeper-they-bury-me/>

Public Facing Advocacy Writing

close

Search

close

close

by [Lisa Dawson](#) | April 11, 2013

The following poem is by Herman Wallace, who has been held in solitary confinement in Louisiana's prison system for almost 41 years, mostly in the Louisiana State Penitentiary, known as Angola. Convicted of killing a guard at Angola, Wallace and fellow prisoner Albert Woodfox, both members of the Angola 3, were placed in solitary in 1972, where, with the exception of a few brief periods, they have remained ever since (read [more](#) about Wallace, Woodfox and the Angola 3). Wallace is now housed in a maximum security prison near Baton Rouge, subjected to conditions which some claim are worse than those at Angola.

A DEFINED VOICE

They removed my whisper from general population

To maximum security I gained a voice

They removed my voice from maximum security

To administrative segregation

My voice gave hope

They removed my voice from administrative segregation

To solitary confinement

My voice became vibration for unity

They removed my voice from solitary confinement

To the Supermax of Camp J

And now they wish to destroy me

The louder my voice the deeper they bury me

I SAID, THE LOUDER MY VOICE THE DEEPER THEY BURY ME!

Free all political prisoners, prisoners of war, prisoner of consciousness.

**[Listen](#) to Herman Wallace read A Defined Voice.*

Lisa Dawson served as an assistant editor, social media manager, and contributor at Solitary Watch. She continues to support prisoners and their family members who need help navigating re-entry. She is on Twitter [@endsolitary](#).

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 [Voices from Solitary](#)

September 30, 2022

by [Voices from Solitary](#)

September 19, 2022

by [Voices from Solitary](#)

September 6, 2022

Solitary Watch encourages comments and welcomes a range of ideas, opinions, debates, and respectful disagreement. We do not allow name-calling, bullying, cursing, or personal attacks of any kind. Any embedded links should be to information relevant to the conversation. Comments that violate these guidelines will be removed, and repeat offenders will be blocked. Thank you for your cooperation.

Having brothers that suffered their same fate: If Bobby Dellelo did not overturn his case he would be in solitary to this very day, he has been home nine years; Bobby was written about in Agawands New Yorker article along with John McCain and Terry Waite. This is a horrific story; that is happening in prisons all over the Country; it is a National move to shut up Black Voices My associate Ralph Hamm on his 45th. year in the MA prison system for the same thing, he paid for the crime many years ago; he is paying for his political views, for starting black educational programs for believing that we could develop a union in the 1970s; and the fact was we were on our way. This is a National struggle and effort to end this torture that has to happen; join what ever group you can and fight this indignity in every state. Call your Federal, State and even local politicians and tell them we need to end this cruelty These folks are coming out far worse than when they went in, we must change.. In all honesty, I do not know if prayers do any good, however, I send them up to my God, for all these folks locked away in hell, I hope you do the same..

Two years ago I wrote a poem Combat Engineer comparing fighting the stigma of mental illness from which I suffer for 33 years and a combat engineer who builds bridges while armed and fighting the enemy. Your poem inspires me to write about the sacred cause of ending prisons , mass incarceration , dehumanizing men and women. I have hesitated in the past because I have never been in prison but for the past year I have written men in prisons from Crescent City to Dannamora ,Kettle Moraine Correctional Institution. Their story , their lives , have become my life , my struggle. Just like Dylan said , You dont have to be a weatherman to know which way the wind blows. Or , Hebrews 13:3 Remember the prisoner as if chained with them- those who are mistreated- since you yourselves are in body also.

I have found that speaking up anywhere in the prison system rarely helps the prisoner always suffers some setback.

A deliberate consequence for speaking out for your own rights, dignity and humanity the system punishes those that carry a voice because it airs their vengeance in public and that's forbidden under any circumstances this is why solitary confinement must be heard in the courtroom where the voice can speak without being silenced by threats or torturous methods ignored and denied by all ~

P.O. Box 11374
Washington, DC 20008

info@solitarywatch.org

Solitary Watch

Copyright 2022, Solitary Watch

Read about [rights and permissions](#).



Solitary Watch News