

Solitary Watch

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://solitarywatch.org/2012/12/17/voices-from-solitary-no-wonder-there-are-so-many-suicides/>

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by [Voices from Solitary](#) | December 17, 2012

The following comes from a prisoner currently housed in maximum security housing at Utah State Prison, Draper. He has spent, by his estimate, seven years in either supermaximum or maximum security housing. He recently had a heart attack in maximum security and reportedly has received minimal health care treatment while incarcerated. He describes here the Uinta 1 facility, where over 90 inmates are held in long-term isolation. Sal Rodriguez

I spent the first two years of my incarceration in general population at a county jail. I had my first heart attack while at the county jail due to misdiagnosed Type 1 Diabetes. Despite my repeated attempts to get medical help, the officials repeatedly denied that there was anything wrong with me even though I exhibited all of the symptoms and signs of diabetes. Eventually, the misdiagnosed diabetes led to the heart attack.

I spent nine days in Intensive Care at the University Medical Center before being released back to prison where I was promptly placed in supermax Uinta 1. I had not committed any violations to be placed in supermax other than having a heart attack.

I wasn't considered a protective custody case, as I had just spent two years in general population. No reason was given for my being housed in supermax. I spent only a few months in supermax before being shipped out to another prison out of state. Once back in Utah I was once again placed in supermax without due process or reason, and I spent the next 20 months locked down. I have spent about seven years or more now housed in either supermax or max. I have never had any write-ups or violations to warrant me being housed in maximum security.

I can tell you that life in supermax (Uinta 1) is inhumane. There are inmates still being housed in that unit who have been there for eight years or more, who started off completely sane but now have lost all sanity. Suicide was common in the Uintas just a few years ago, forcing the prison to take preventative measures by installing new vent-housings that wouldn't allow a rope to be tied to it for hanging. There are still many suicides that occur there, although it's not like it used to be years ago.

The abuses still continue today with some of the torture techniques used in foreign interrogation. Cells are kept cold, lights are kept on 24/7, guards purposely make noise at all hours to prevent sleep.

Windows are covered by a small door that is only opened when the guard occasionally looks in, as for count. Mental health care is a joke, as the mental health worker goes cell to cell not spending more than five seconds at each door and only asks "Are you ok?" It's no wonder there are so many suicides. Mental health shows a lack of concern for those in supermax. It's the general attitude there.

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

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.

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My question after reading this, is, why would any prisoner be in Supermax without ANY violations or being written up? Who is monitoring this system? Is the Warden just allowed to turn his head on prisoners rights completely? What does the Governor do about this injustice to prisoners??? They are doing their time, but, why should they be abused while doing so? Who can be contacted to bring light to this situation? The President? Is he interested in treatment of prisoners being abused for no apparent reason?

Correctional Treatment Centers, are as good as solitary confinement. Why don't people see this. Inmates are locked down for the same 23 of 24 hours a day. Restrictions on what they can have. Some do not even have a television do to no antenna or cable. They do have plenty of solitude and not by choice. The Title 15 rules are selective. The guards treat them as though they are fresh off the streets. Those that are seriously ill live in pain and abuse. The mental abuse is the same as physical.

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