

Solitary Watch

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

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Our Weekly Roundup of News and Views on Solitary Confinement

by [Aviva Stahl](#) | August 7, 2016

[Mother Jones](#) journalist Shane Bauer wrote about Damien Coestly, a prisoner Bauer met while he was reporting undercover at the Winn Correctional Center in Louisiana. Coestly has since committed suicide while he was placed in a segregation cell at the facility.

New York City [released data](#) on the number of violent incidents at Rikers Island, announcing that for the first six months of the year inmate assaults on staff resulting in serious injuries decreased 45% compared with the same period last year and the use of force by officers causing serious injuries went down 46% data which suggests things at the facility are getting safer, despite the decreased use of isolation. The number of people held in solitary confinement is down by 75% since Correction Commissioner Joseph Ponte took over two years ago.

People locked up at Wisconsin prisons in Columbia and Green Bay may be participating in the hunger strike that a few inmates at the Waupun Correctional Institution began on June 5th, according to [Milwaukee Public Radio](#). Dodge County Circuit Court has ruled to allow the force-feeding of three people participating in the hunger strike, which is a protest against the states use of solitary confinement.

A journalist for the [Charlotte Observer](#) chronicled the experiences of one man who has been held in solitary confinement in North Carolinas prisons. Jason Swain, who has been in isolation for more than 4,800 straight days, has engaged in frequent self-harm, including swallowing razors, ripping open surgical incisions and plunging sharp objects into his open wounds.

The Center for American Progress and the Movement Advancement Project [published a report](#) on the experiences of LGBT people of color in the criminal justice system, including the use of solitary. Segregating or isolating incarcerated people limits their ability to access programs and services available to the general prison population. Additionally, when individuals are placed in protective custody or isolated, they are at increased risk for harassment and abuse by correctional officers because of reduced visibility and oversight.

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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