

Solitary Watch

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

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by [Aviva Stahl](#) | August 10, 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.

According to the latest [report](#) published by New York City's Board of Corrections, more than 90% of those placed in disciplinary segregation at Rikers Island do not receive their daily, legally-mandated hour of recreation. The report's findings were covered by a variety of outlets, including the [NY Daily News](#).

The Department of Justice released a [report](#) which concludes that there is a pattern of practice of conduct at Rikers that violates the constitutional rights of adolescent inmates, and that the Department of Corrections relies far too heavily on punitive segregation as a disciplinary measure. [The New York Times](#) wrote an editorial supporting the extensive recommendations outlined in the report, including a reform of the institutional culture of the jail system to ensure that violence is no longer tolerated.

The Bronx District Attorney has [declined to prosecute](#) any Rikers staff in an alleged 2012 assault on two prisoners, which was described in detail in the New York Times last month. Several individuals, including civilian staff members, had previously come forward to tell investigators what they had witnessed, but this week DA office announced that there were inconsistencies and contradictions in testimony.

In the June/July 2014 issue of [Correctional Law Reporter](#), Fred Cohen, LL.B., LL.M., convenes a panel of experts on prisons and the law in a symposium examining the use of and alternatives to solitary confinement in three hypothetical cases that illustrate the conditions, circumstances, and types of offenders consigned to administrative segregation in prisons around the U.S. Written for prison and jail administrators and their legal counsel, the bimonthly *Correctional Law Reporter* covers legal and constitutional issues in corrections.

A federal judge has allowed a class-action lawsuit against the Arizona Department of Corrections [to move forward](#), dismissing the state's request for summary judgment. The suit alleges that more than 33,000 prisoners in Arizona have endured poor prison health care and excessive solitary confinement. A trial is set to start in October.

Solitary Watch's Victoria Law published an article on [Gothamist](#) exploring what it's like to be 16 and in solitary on Rikers Island.

A trial against the New Jersey Department of Corrections continues this week. In the lawsuit, Lester Alford [alleges](#) that the DOC violated his rights against cruel and unusual punishment and that he was placed in disciplinary isolation without a proper hearing. In court he stated, they locked me in a cell behind a cage like an animal. I didn't get to see my own face for three years.

A North Idaho teenager charged with murdering his father and brother has been removed from isolation in an adult facility and [returned to a juvenile detention center](#). The ACLU of Idaho had previously filed documents stating that Eldon Samuel III's treatment in the Kootenai County Jail is worse than the Guantanamo Bay detention camp.

Aviva Stahl is a Brooklyn-based reporter who writes about science/health at the intersection of mass incarceration, national security, and trans rights. She's 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 [Caitlin Konya](#)

October 19, 2022

by [Mirilla Zhu](#)

October 12, 2022

by [Caitlin Konya](#)

October 5, 2022

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