

# Solitary Watch

## Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://solitarywatch.org/2010/03/05/for-jamie-scott-an-11-robbery-in-mississippi-may-carry-a-death-sentence/>

## Campaign and Advocacy

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by [James Ridgeway and Jean Casella](#) | March 5, 2010

On February 25, a small crowd gathered outside the state capitol in Jackson, Mississippi, to push for the release of sisters Jamie and Gladys Scott, who are serving two consecutive life sentences apiece for a 1993 armed robbery in which no one was injured and the take, by most accounts, was about \$11. Supporters of the Scott sisters have long tried to draw attention to their case, as an extreme example of the distorted justice and [Draconian sentencing policies](#) that have overloaded prisons, crippled state budgets, and torn families apart across the United States. But in recent months, their cause has taken on a new urgency, because for Jamie Scott, an unwarranted life sentence may soon become a death sentence.

Jamie Scott, 38, is suffering from kidney failure. At the Central Mississippi Correctional Facility (CMCF) in Pearl, where Jamie and Gladys are incarcerated, medical services are provided by a private contractor called Wexford Health Sources, which has been the subject of lawsuits and legislative investigations in several states over inadequate treatment of the inmates in its care. According to Jamie Scott's family, in the six weeks since her condition became life-threatening, she has endured faulty or missed dialysis sessions, infections, and other complications. She has received no indication that a kidney transplant is being considered as an option, though her sister is a willing donor.

Jamie Scott's family and legal advisors believe the poor health care she is receiving in prison places her life at risk. They have sent pleas for clemency or compassionate release to Governor Haley Barbour, whose [tough-on-crime posturing](#) and dubious [record on issuing pardons](#) do not bode well for Jamie. According to a local television station that reported on the rally at the capitol, a [spokesperson for Barbour said](#): Jamie Scott was tried, convicted and incarcerated, and she is receiving her care with the Department of Corrections.

The Mississippi Department of Corrections (MDOC) has a provision for what it calls [conditional medical release](#), but Scott is not a candidate, department spokesperson Suzanne Garbo Singletary said in an email last week, because MDOC policy provides that an inmate must have a condition that is incapacitating, totally disabling and/or terminal in nature in order to qualify. So Jamie Scott appears to be caught in a deadly Catch-22: In order to be released from prison, she must convince the MDOC that her illness is terminal or totally disabling; but the only sure way for her to prove this is to die in prison.

[\[READ THE FULL ARTICLE HERE\]](#)

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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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If they had been rich and white, they would have gotten community service.

3/11 JAMIE SCOTT IS SUFFERING WITH PAIN, SWELLING, INFECTION AND WEAKNESS & NEEDS IMMEDIATE MEDICAL ATTENTION OUTSIDE OF THE PRISON! Her catheter is clogged with pus & her hands, feet, & ankles are swollen. She is in tremendous pain & very weak. Please contact the governor and commissioner to release her from the horrible conditions she is in & the poor medical care that she is receiving. GOV. BARBOURS OFFICE, 1-877-405-0733 or 601-359-3150 // Christopher Epps, Commissioner of Prisons, 601-359-5600, [CEPPS@mdoc.state.ms.us](mailto:CEPPS@mdoc.state.ms.us)

There is no human compassion in the soul of Haley Barbour. He is also guilty of the sin of gluttony, while many of his constituents go hungry.

Jesus Christ would be totally ignored or called a progressive if he came again today. And he would tell the wealthy to give away their riches if they hoped to achieve the kingdom of heaven. All of those tv ministers, Joel and the rest, and the Republican party, would deny him and his message.

Wonder what Christ thinks of Rush and Beck?

I am reminded of the torture and murder of 14 yr. old Emmett Till in Mississippi, whose killers sat in the courtroom and laughed and kissed their wives for the photographers outside.

Mississippi will never be able to make up for the human misery it has caused its african-american citizens.

It is a blessing that most of these citizens are just good, long-suffering people, or there would not be a white person allowed to live in that state.

With prison violence and the mass use of isolation every sentence is a possible death sentence. It could take the form of mental illness or suicide brought on by the isolation, the contraction of incurable diseases such as aids, or hepatitis contracted when raped amongst other means, or just the death of ones spirit. Prisons affects are unpredictable but predictable negative.

California man gets eight years for stealing cheese Robert Ferguson was sentenced under the three strikes law, as critics again plea for reform of states overcrowded prisons

California man gets eight years for stealing cheese

Robert Ferguson was sentenced under the three strikes law, as critics again plea for reform of states overcrowded prisons

Wednesday 3 March 2010

The Guardian

Daniel Nasaw

A California man has been sentenced to up to eight years in prison for stealing a \$3.99 (2.60) bag of shredded cheese in a case critics say shows the need for reform of the states criminal justice system and the overcrowded state of its prisons.

[http://realcostofprisons.org/blog/archives/2010/03/california\\_man.html#more](http://realcostofprisons.org/blog/archives/2010/03/california_man.html#more)

It is bone chilling to the spirit to have knowledge of Jamies state of condition, and also having the knowledge that there are so many suffering in the same way. It would seem law was created to protect, and preserve, and not to mete out treacherous justice. We must somehow find a way to once again extract a grain of salt from the sea of humility compassion, and agape love not confined in religiosity but the infinite domain of spirituality and human kindness.,,,

P.O. Box 11374

Washington, DC 20008

[info@solitarywatch.org](mailto:info@solitarywatch.org)

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