

Solitary Watch

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

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Public Facing Advocacy Writing

close

Search

close

close

by [Jean Casella and James Ridgeway](#) | August 1, 2010

Even in the context of a nation in lockdown, the state of Colorado stands out for the sheer number and visibility of its supermax prison facilities. Colorado is home to the federal governments most famous supermax, the United States Penitentiary Administrative Maximum Facility, commonly known as ADX. The nearby Colorado State Penitentiary (CSP) has a 750-man lockdown unit that was featured in the recent [National Geographic Explorer documentary](#) on solitary confinement. And on September 1, [the state will open CSP II](#), which will hold more than 300 solitary confinement cells. Remarkably, all of these prisons and several others are located in a single county, Fremont County in rural south central Colorado. (Fremont and its county seat, Caon City, are the subject of an interactive web documentary called [Prison Valley](#).)

CSP II was the [subject of controversy](#) and protest earlier this year, when cash-strapped Colorado made deep cuts to education and other state services, but managed to come up with the \$10.8 million to open the new prison. This, in part, is the subject of this essay by **Clair L. Beazer**, an inmate in Administrative Segregation at CSP. He sent this piece, which he calls Lock Downs and Monsters, to Lois Ahrens of the [Real Cost of Prisons Project](#), along with a note that explains: Here in the lock-down (Administrative Segregation) I receive no earned time and good time is dependent on discretionary parole where 99% don't receive discretion. Colorado will be opening its new C.S.P. II even though it costs three times as much to house someone like this. Colorado already has double (or more) the national average of these types of cells.

In a recent hour long broadcast on the National Geographic Channel, Colorado's C.S.P. (Colorado State Penitentiary) maximum security lock-down facility was featured. At one point its warden Susan Jones described the isolation of the penitentiary's inmates as part of a behavior modification program. Indeed, she then further described the main focus of the facility's reason for existing as a form of behavioral modification and her responsibilities as the supervisor of this program.

Of course, as a measure of any purpose or program there must be a number who fail and those that succeed in having modified their behavior. She never actually utters what percentage that is, as any person proud of a success would, and with good reason. That reason is because very, very few succeed in a grim, draconian program that is based on an isolation that exacerbates every phobia, psychosis, psychopathology, and antisocial tendency already run rampant among them.

Furthermore, it would be obvious to any unbiased perspective that any behavior modification program that fails to modify behavior is an outright and abject failure. Moreover, one that magnifies and grievously worsens *and* increases antisocial behaviors that it is specifically designed to modify is a travesty and a behavior modification program in name only.

In addition many courts have found that this type of incarceration to be unconstitutional, and those of us unfortunate to be suffering through it can testify that it is both cruel and very unusual.

The fact that Colorado will now expand upon its hidden failure is outrageous! After building the new C.S.P. II, the state finds it must now fund this albatross to the tune of what will eventually amount to billions and is the most expensive, inefficient and ineffective program in the entire state.

How could this be, and where in the world would such a foolish failure see the light of day? Right here in the incarceration capital of the world where failure is not only rewarded, it is now being duplicated with the soon to open C.S.P. II.

Here in the home of sinecure, base of the prison of the prison industrial complex, the public pays: Pays to put the inmates in prison, pays for the upkeep and millions in salaries. Pays for the duration of the stay, and if that isn't enough they will pay yet another pound of flesh when these modified monsters are unleashed back onto the public after being warehoused for years and building their frustration, anger and enmity.

In Mary Shelley's classic man/monster tale, Dr. Frankenstein slowly assembled his monster piece by piece as Colorado now does on a much larger scale. Up here in the rarified air they call it job security, and the Department of Corrections is our personal Dr. Frankenstein in woefully misnamed Fremont County.

The author welcomes mail and can be contacted at: Mr. Clair L. Beazer, C.S.P. #49801, P.O. Box 777, Canon City, CO 81215-0777.



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 [Voices from Solitary](#)

September 30, 2022

by [Voices from Solitary](#)

September 19, 2022

by [Voices from Solitary](#)

September 6, 2022

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They are not interested in rehabilitation, they are interested in continuously feeding the machine. Lock them up, make them worse, let them out and lock them up again. Gotta keep those big shiny new prisons full so everyone else can get a paycheck

I Truly believe that Susan Jones is worse than ANY of the prisoners she houses. I realize there must be prisons and I have no problem with punishing criminals. The problem I have is that most people that go to prison these days, including murders, rapists and child molesters, WILL someday be back in society. That being said, if you dont do something to rehabilitate these people we will be putting them back in prison over and over and we will be paying for them over and over. We MUST start to realize that unless we rehabilitate them then were just creating harder, more heartless criminals. For instance, a man is sent to prison for dealing drugs. He did that because he had no education and had no other way to provide for his family. We sentence him to 10 years in prison. If hes in a segregation type of prison like this Colorado State Penitentiary, he will come out, still without an education AND VERY VIOLENT. Now we have a man living next to us selling drugs, committing armed robberies and harming people. WE, as a society, created this super criminal. If we would have made sure this man had some morals, an education and feelings for his fellow man, we wouldnt be afraid of this man. We wouldnt be afraid to live next to him. Angola prison in Louisiana has a program that is one of the best I have ever heard of.

The point is, like I said, most criminals put in prison today will someday be out of prison. If they come out worse than they went in, we will pay for not rehabilitating him. If we can rehabilitate them and cut down the recidivism rate then well have more room in our prisons for the murders, rapists and child molesters. Well be able to keep the most dangerous predators in prison because we wont have the overcrowding problems that we have now. I know that many people say they dont want to pay to educate a prisoner and that they have more privileges in prison than they should be we have to deal with reality and not what should be. The reality is that most will be out. The reality is that IF they arent rehabilitated they will go back in over and over so rehabilitate them and then well have room to keep the dangerous felons.

Susan Jones thinks she knows how it feels to be treated like a f***n animal? I would love to see that women do 2 months in her own system. She would lose her mind! Im not a criminal and I think her methods are garbage, in-humane, and disgraceful. Thanks Charlie

We cannot address the real issues as many Coloradans do not concern themselves with the cauldron of hate brewing in the Ad Seg units of our system. Why would they? Oh, until, a young child, mother, daughter, sister or loved one is brutally assaulted. Who is responsible? Was the offender violent before? Did the offender suffer from serious mental illness prior to isolation? Who knows? Where is the data? CDOC has to be responsible for opening the lid to Pandors Box. Releasing someone full of rage and plagued by mental illness associated with isolation would seem illogical and dangerous. Receiving treatment prior to release is needed, but why create a monster to begin with? There has to be a better way.

Warden Susan Jones is the real monster.

He writes:

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warehoused for years and building their frustration, anger and enmity.

Others share his concern.

http://www.utexas.edu/know/2010/11/22/renaud_jorge/

In Texas prisons, violence and racism reign
by Jorge Antonio Renaud
Published: Nov. 22

Jorge Antonio Renaud, a graduate student in the School of Social Work, spent 27 years in Texas prisons. This post is part of a Know series on the Texas prison system.

Never let anyone tell you that violence is always announced, preceded by heavy air or dismal premonitions. It strikes unexpectedly, bloody chaos in a brightly lit room, on a sunny handball court or in the middle of a chow hall, boots and fists thudding on their victim as others watch from the corners of their eyes, fearful of seeing or knowing too much..

Texas prisons results in thousands of men leaving the system with a predator mentality or a raging racism buried so deep it might never be eradicated. Reducing barriers to reentry is one thing understanding and relieving the trauma this unceasing violence leaves on the thousands of Texans returning to our streets is another.

wow so just how high is CO state lol i mean i know the man from the netgo thing the nashions leading expert the one the only Dr. Stuart E. Grassian met the man in rl he is right on what it dose to you solitary will f with your mind forever still is with mine lol realy sucks but back to what i was saying hear i seen the thing yes the warden is puting on her horse and pony show for you they are good at it she blowing it all out the side of her but i mean Grassian is on my resume ok i know what i saying if he backs me i mean why solitary cells why not normal prison i say this for a fun thing they want to open it on the first of septber so i say we make the first of septber every one email the CO government thare thouts on the new prison day lol get my thingking lol

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