

Solitary Watch

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

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by [Aviva Stahl](#) | April 20, 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.

April 17 marked Albert Woodfox's 42nd year in solitary confinement. Woodfox, a member of the Angola 3, remains locked up even though his sentence [has been overturned](#) three times.

Andrew Cohen of [The Atlantic](#) pens a review of *Solitary Nation*, the first of two highly anticipated Frontline documentaries about the US criminal justice system. *Solitary Nation* is due to air on PBS on Tuesday night.

The Center for Investigative Reporting posted their newest story on [Medium](#): an in-depth look at Santa Cruz Country Juvenile Hall, which is considered a model facility when it still places youth in 23-hour isolation, sometimes for days on end. CIR [also posted](#) a Q&A with a neuroscientist about how isolation affects still-developing brains.

A Maine court has sent an individual with a diagnosed personality disorder [back to prison](#) after ruling that he now has substantial capacity to appreciate [the] wrongfulness of his behavior. Experts testified that Michael James had improved while in a psychiatric facility but was still engaging in self-harm and manipulating hospital staff. James has previously spent many years in solitary confinement.

A transgender teenage girl has been [placed in de facto solitary confinement](#) in a Connecticut adult prison, despite the fact that she faces no criminal charges. A rarely-used statute in the state enables the Department of Children and Families (DCF) to place juveniles in adult prisons if they prove they cannot care for the youth anywhere else.

[Vice](#) featured a piece about Mahdi Hashi, the 24-year old terror suspect currently held in pre-trial solitary confinement at Metropolitan Correctional Center in Manhattan. In 2012, Hashi was stripped of his British citizenship, held for months in a Djibouti prison, then rendered to the United States and indicted on federal charges.

The Colorado Senate has [passed a bill to](#) reduce the use of solitary confinement for individuals with mental illness. The states House will now consider the bills passage.

[The New York Times](#) covered the conditions of confinement endured by Boston bomber suspect Dzhokhar Tsarnaev. He is currently held in pre-trial solitary confinement and is further bound by extremely restrictive Special Administrative Measures (SAMs).

An individual incarcerated in an Alabama prison [alleges](#) that he has spent the last four months in solitary confinement in retaliation for organizing an inmate work strike. Speaking to reporters using a contraband phone, Melvin Ray described the conditions on the inside as hell on Earth and condemned a systematic operation that allows private manufacturing industries to utilize the prisons low-wage labor.

A federally funded watchdog group empowered to investigate complaints about the mistreatment of people with disabilities has

[launched an investigation](#) into abuses at Bridgewater State Hospital. Individuals with mental illness at the medium-security prison have allegedly been put into physical restraints and isolation cells in violation of state law and a court order.

Writing in [Aeon](#), philosopher Lisa Guenther uses phenomenology to explore how the extensive use of solitary confinement across the United States affects those of us living on the outside. She writes, Solitary confinement is most clearly and immediately a form of violence against the experienced world of the prisoner. But if our here is intertwined with their there, it cannot help but affect our own capacities to see, hear, and make sense of our lives.

[The Post and Courier](#) has published an investigation into the placement of people with mental illness in South Carolina's Special Management Units. Across the state, nearly 1,700 prisoners were held in segregation units as of last week, including 473 classified as mentally ill.

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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Read- My Name is Jamie. Life in Prison <http://www.sonniquick.blog.com> Jamie has been in solitary (aka ad seg or G5 for over 8 years now. I know the struggle it takes to keep deep depression under control.

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