

Solitary Watch

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://solitarywatch.org/2014/03/25/voices-solitary-day-life-part-iv/>

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by [Voices from Solitary](#) | March 25, 2014

This post is the next in a series of pieces Solitary Watch is publishing as part of a project calling for people held in solitary confinement to write on various proposed themes. Our first suggested theme, A Day in the Life, calls for writers to describe a day in his or her life in solitary confinement (read previous entries [here](#)).

The following comes from Kenny Zulu Whitmore, a political prisoner and former member of the Black Panther Party at Angola correctional facility in Louisiana, who has spent a total of 35 years in Closed Cell Restriction, 28 of which have been served consecutively. In his piece, Zulu describes the inhumane conditions to which he has been subjected in near sensory deprivation for the last three-and-a-half decades.

Zulu welcomes letters from supporters and can be reached by writing Kenny Zulu Whitmore, 86468 D-Hawk/CCR-4L, Louisiana State Prison, Angola, LA 70712 or on his blog at [Freezulu.org](#). Lisa Dawson

My Prolonged Isolation of 35 Years on Angolas CCR, the equivalent of solitary confinement

I have been held in CCR for a total of 35 years, 28 years of which have been consecutive. For over three decades, I have been held in a 69 cell, but because of the bunk bed on one wall and the lavatory-washbasin-combination toilet on the back wall, I have only 43 feet of actual floor space to live in, 24/7. This has been my existence for 35 years, with the exception of one hour a day when I am given an hour on the tier to shower, exercise or just walk the hall. Three days a week, weather permitting, I am also placed in full restraints: waist chain, handcuffs and leg irons. We are permitted to wear a jump suit with only boxers and a T-shirt, not fitting considering the cold winter season. During these cold winter months, for example, there are only nine (9) coats for 52 men, some of whom exercise in the coat, while others blow their noses on the sleeves of the coat, etc. So you either wear this outwear as is or you refuse your hour out for recreation.

In the Closed Cell Restrictive Unit, the cells are both poorly lighted and ventilated, causing various health problems. Many men held on CCR wear prescription glasses, because of the lack of light in the cell. Inside the cell itself, you have a vision span of only 11 feet because you cannot see out of the small window.

During the hot summer months, the outdated ventilation system causes the temperatures in the cells to reach 100-110 degrees, resulting in stress and hypertension. I am now on two different kinds of high blood pressure medications (Carzaar, Novac). My eyesight has greatly deteriorated. That has nothing to do with age, as I have a degenerative muscle in my left eye, which causes it to involuntarily move, resulting in double vision.

CCR is a non-punitive housing unit, but the men housed on CCR are prohibited from participating in any of the educational and religious programs. We are not allowed to learn meaningful job skills that could be transferred in the event of re-entry.

After 35 years in CCR solitary confinement, my visitors have been restricted to only immediate family. I can no longer have visits with my nieces, nephews, cousins or friends. Why else would this restriction be put in place besides to punish prisoners? When visitation is such a vital tool in the rehabilitation process, inmate visits with family and friends helps to prepare one to re-enter society. This visiting restriction that has been in place for two years only creates undue hardship for the inmates, their families and friends. There is no penological reason that justifies this restriction that only applies to the 100 men on Angolas CCR/solitary confinement and no other inmates at the Louisiana State Penitentiary at Angola.

Inmates here at Camp-D CCR are punished and retaliated against when we speak out against the violation of our rights under the [Civil Rights of Institutionalized Persons Act \(CRIPA\)](#). Look what happened to Herman Wallace and Albert Woodfox, and what is happening to Albert Woodfox right now with the degrading, humiliating body cavity searches which he endures up to six times a day. Only because he questioned why he has been denied contact visitation with family and friends.

No doubt, I too will be retaliated against once this article becomes public knowledge, but sacrifices must be made to bring about change.

The U.S. is a democratic society today because of those like [Crispus Attucks](#), who made the ultimate sacrifice.

Freedom aint never been free. Kenny Zulu Whitmore

The Voices from Solitary series publishes dispatches from people surviving the lived experience of solitary confinement.

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

Solitary Watch encourages comments and welcomes a range of ideas, opinions, debates, and respectful disagreement. We do not allow name-calling, bullying, cursing, or personal attacks of any kind. Any embedded links should be to information relevant to the conversation. Comments that violate these guidelines will be removed, and repeat offenders will be blocked. Thank you for your cooperation.

Joe Gonzalez, Why is it always the mouths that squeak loudest are the ones that speak the foolish? May I suggest you step out from behind your public flawless facade so you can see yourself your less credible reality? I respect everyone's right to express their opinions but when someone intentionally opines with cause to bash another person's opinion with this 'I'm holier than thou' attitude it is my nature as a fellow human being with morals to in turn give my opinion too. You blatantly say you have the right to convey your opinion and to share it based on your experiences but with the same tongue you just finished insulting another human being right convey his opinion based on his experiences. What a hypocrite! And practice what you preach you, when you make assumptions and dish out advice like this.. You probably showed no compassion or consideration to your victims. Stop sniveling and be a man. Ha! You, yourself, show no compassion or consideration and use this forum to snivel. What don't you be man, Mr. Military Man Shame on you holding yourself up with such high standards but so far I'm least bit impressed with your words. What blows me the way the most is that you say you were taught wrong from right and to believe in God yet your arrogant, prideful, hypocritical, judgemental, and without any compassion for someone suffering. Furthermore if you believed in God like you claim to you would know that God preaches against, arrogance, pridefulness, hypocrites, judgemental, and instructs us to love one another as we love ourselves and to show compassion and forgiveness to your brother. He is very clear we are not to pass judgement on others. Who Do You Think You Are? God? Remember all fall short of the glory we all walk in perfect we all sin we all make mistakes and we all deserve forgiveness compassion an unconditional love unfortunately its individuals like yourself that believe you're above all of that yet you act below all of that. You say you feel people have lost touch with reality and our core values have deteriorated, and you suggest Mr Zulu spend time preparing Writs I feel the only person who's lost touch with reality and core values have deteriorated as you know Gonzales and I suggest you spend reading the Bible and take a good look in the mirror. And then you tell someone else I suggest you do a little research before you start insulting people. And so in conclusion, I leave you with this my self righteous little friend, I suggest you do a little self reflecting before you publicly make a big fool of yourself Matthew 7:5 Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye. Matt 7:5 Do not judge others, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn others, or it will all come back against you. Forgive others, and you will be forgiven. Luke 6:37

It is a shame that these solitary watch people could not keep this site simple and had to complicate it with all this bullshit disqus crap. It is a pain in the ass just to respond with a simple statement. That's it for me everyone. As usual some geek has to fuck up a good thing.

love joes MEANINGFUL EDUCATED comments! Elieen welcome to reality! This is a real world with real consequences (this in a way should make you sleep easier at night). How people find pity for these less desirable individuals blows my mind. The only comments that should be taken serious are the ones that weigh the entirety of the situation these scum bags have gotten themselves into.

1776 sorry Ms. Siple, an over site.

Mr. Gonzalez, first let me say that you have no business belittling others and making inferences regarding their intelligence, when your own response is filled with grammatical and punctuation error. He who lives in glass houses

I'm not sure what would motivate you to come to a site like this and spew such nonsense. I think you should at least try to understand that most of us love this country; we would rather try to fix the problems within our country than flee our country and yes, it is our country, too. I appreciate your service to our country, but it would seem to me that you, as someone who has fought to protect the rights of the people in this country, should be outraged by the trampling of the rights of a particular segment of our population. Nobody here will tell you that a guilty person should go unpunished. We do, however, believe that the punishment should not be one that is considered inhumane by the rest of the world. Our nation is better than that, and it is our responsibility, as good citizens, to ensure that all of our inmates are treated in a manner that is humane and leaves them amenable to rehabilitation.

Ms. Siple

I respect your response and opinion. I understand perfectly the quest to improve our judicial and correctional system. Considering that this country is the youngest on the planet, I believe we have made considerable progress since 177. Have we reached our goals, no, it will be an ongoing process which will continue to change as new generations become of age. I have clearly stated in my messages that I do not oppose improvement, however, it becomes a little frustrating to read comments from people pleading for changes for these convicted criminals as if they are being treated inhuman. Prison should be a deterrent, it should represent punishment. We want our young people to understand what will happen if they decide to live a lawless lifestyle. I also believe that we should focus a substantial amount of our attention and resources on our young people. Our core values have deteriorated significantly over the years to accommodate an influx of different cultures and races. Why dont we say the Pledge of Alligence in our schools. Parents cannot discipline their own children anymore. Too many people are selling drugs in this country. You are absolutely correct, I joined the Marine Corps. I was happy to sacrifice my life for this country and I still am. I was raised during a time when kids were taught wrong from right, I was taught to believe in God and country. I was raised patriotic, and to respect the lives and property of others. That is why I am not sitting in one of those cells. I have my opinion and it is justified. If any of those individuals was wrongly convicted then I support their crusade to be retried. If they were not, then I say, stop complaining. They put themselves there. They had a choice just like the rest of us. We have choices in this country, we can do right, get educated, get good employment and live in nice areas to raise our families. I have been assigned to a military brig. I have supervised prisoners. I have also conducted sociological projects within the California Department of Corrections. Unfortunately there are some individuals that should not be allowed to return to society. Please keep in mind that the conditions they may experience now are most likely a result of their actions. Also, keep in mind the victims that these individuals created as a result of their indiscretion.

Let me say in closing, that I have every right to convey my opinion in this forum as anyone else. I am sorry if my opinion does not conform to yours or anyone elses. But I believe that is the purpose of this website. Regardless, I will continue to convey my opinion on this and any other website where I feel people have lost touch with reality. Please excuse my bad spelling, grammar, and punctuation. A PHD does not make a person perfect.

Joe Gonzalez, you must have not read this:

<http://www.freezulu.org/p/2012-statement-by-kenny-zulu-whitmore.html>

Please stop jumping to conclusions and learn about the unjust justice system.

Response: I am not jumping to anything. I share my opinions based on my personal experience and knowledge. I would appreciate if you would read my messages thoroughly or have someone educated to read them to you. I am well aware that our justice system has flaws and is not perfect. Innocent people have been victimized in the United States since its birth. I do believe that there are improvements that should be made however for now I believe our system is one of the best on earth. I am also a Marine Corp veteran, born and raised in this country. Who ever feels so strongly that our judicial system or government is so bad the I suggest you pack up your property and get the hell out of this country. Go cry and complain in Iran or China I am sure they will listen up until the day they hang you. I know what I write about, I suggest you do a little research before you start insulting people.

Mr. Zulu

I find your narrative detailed and informing. I would like to ask you if you would mind sharing with this audience the specific nature of the offenses you committed outside and inside prison which placed you in your current predicament. I dont condone torture, however, if your conditions do in fact violate constitutional laws then I would suggest you spend time preparing Writs for the courts to address the conditions. Keep in mind Mr. Zulu none of us were born in prison, the majority of people make it there due to mistakes, bad judgement, or just careless disregard for other people. In most cases people have to commit multiple mistakes to get to your situation. How many did you make ? Prison is not suppose to be nice and comfortable. Prisoners should not be treated like dignitaries or celebrities. Now you are complaining of in humane treatment, well why didnt you stay out of there and behave. I realize you have been there a long time which indicates you made major mistakes. Here is my point in summation. You put your self there now deal with it. You probably showed no compassion or consideration to your victims. Stop sniveling and be a man.

Dear sir. My prayers go out to you and your family.. I have 15 yr old son who is in smu.in mcso jail ..being tried as an adult. I am a member of aclu. And will continue to fight to stop solitary confinement. ..be strong

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