

Solitary Watch

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://solitarywatch.org/2017/09/14/voices-from-solitary-things-i-always-carry-with-me/>

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by [Voices from Solitary](#) | September 14, 2017

The following piece is by Andrea May Darlene Weiskircher, who was incarcerated at the Ada County Jail and Pocatello Womens Correctional Center in Idaho on theft and forgery charges. In total, she spent over three years in solitary confinement, including one period that lasted a full year. Weiskircher had long struggled with mental illness, and during her time in prison her mental health deteriorated significantly. She says she attempted suicide multiple times while incarcerated.

Released earlier this year, Weiskircher is an administrator for the Ministry of HELPS resource center, a Christian organization that offers a variety of services to currently and formerly incarcerated people, homeless people, and veterans. The center provides free books to people in prison a program that has its roots in Weiskirchers time behind bars, when she would share books sent by her grandfather with other incarcerated women. Weiskircher says her goal today is to help people in the same situation she once was in. To order up to two free books for someone in prison, send a request specifying their titles and/or types of book to the following address (and if possible include any rules or restrictionsthe receiving prison system places on books sent from the outside): HELPS RESOURCE CENTER-Inmate Book Project, 119 South Valley Drive PMB# 234, Nampa, Idaho 83686. Madeline Batt

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I dont think that Ill ever be the same after solitary. It was the loneliest place Ive ever been in my life, my lowest point.

I still have problems now. People that come really close to me, a lot of stuff going on around me, loud noises, high lights those things all freak me out. It gets hard to adjust. Those things I always carry with me, because I was away for so long.

I did two-and-a-half years of my time at Pocatello inside the single cell, and then I did about a year of the Ada County Jail Segregation Unit as well. So in total Ive done three-and-a-half years in Seg.

In Seg, youre in your cell for 22 hours and 45 minutes a day. The cells maybe four by ten, maybe five by ten, Im not sure. Its not very wide across. Theres one metal desk, a tiny window, and the sink-toilet that connected to each other. The cells used to have bunk beds in them but theyd ripped out the top bunk beds, so theres one bunk bed.

You come out to shower three times a week, and they cuff you to do that. Rec you get five days a week, which is only one hour at a time, and its in a cage. The dog cage is what we called it. The cage is tiny. Literally, I could lay across it, and thats it. Its outside in the middle of nowhere, and its double fenced. You can walk in it, barely. They dont have anything for you to do, so wed just go outside and sit, or pick at bugs and try to reach grass through the cage. Id stick my hands in there and get them stuck.

Two people could go at once, but theyre separated by the double cage. And its on a rotation schedule, so you never got out with the same person. Thats the only time you really ever see anybody.

Other than that, you dont come out for cleaning, you dont come out for phone calls; the only time you come out of your cell is when you go to Ad Seg hearings, which is when they take you in front of the prison officials to see if youre eligible to get out of the hole. Beyond that you dont come out for any reason.

You cant have anything thats actually yours, either. You cant have anything but your toothbrush, your pen, the Styrofoam cup they gave you, your comb, and shampoo. You dont even have a pillow.

I passed the time in Seg by fishing. We would rip up our clothes or rip up our sheets and make a line, and then tie a piece of soap on the end of it, because the soap is the only thing that can fit under the crack of your door. Then you throw stuff, like mayonnaise packets or forks, out into the center of the walk. And then you fish for it you throw the line underneath the doors and slide it as hard as you can and then the soap goes over the thing youre fishing for and pulls it back in.

Sometimes, I made dice out of toilet paper and toothpaste and I would play dice with myself. And I read every book possible. You cant have any other books in that prison except for self-help or religious books they dont leave you with a lot of choices.

When I first got into it I wasn't used to being by myself. I was used to being around people all the time. I wanted to sleep away my time, so the way that I coped was I made the psychiatric doctor medicate me on every kind of medication that he possibly could and as soon as I got used to it, and I wasn't able to sleep, I would have him change my meds. I couldn't cope with being awake in the cell.

I was doing anything I could to get in trouble because the only time I had interaction was with the cops who were passing my cell. I would start kicking the doors and get everybody else in Seg to start kicking the doors with me. We'd kick the doors over and over again, and just keep kicking them. I flooded my cell. I ripped up my sheets to fish with. I passed notes, which was totally against the rules, but I didn't have anybody to talk to and I was on mail restriction, so I'd fish notes out the door to the other people. I'd beg the janitor who came over to clean to bring me coffee, and you're not allowed to have coffee in Seg. I fought with the guards all the time, and once I dumped my tray on one of them. I'm not normally like that, but being in there you feel like you don't have anything left to lose, so why try? It wasn't good for anybody that was inside. Nobody was ever happy.

Every time I went in front of the Ad Seg board they denied me. I went from having my whole life to having nothing, and I think I maybe just lost my mind a little bit. I started getting sadder and sadder. I actually ended up slitting my wrists inside of there.

When I got out of prison, I had been doing good for the first time in my life. I got a job at Chilis. But within four months I lost everything. I was on the run, and I was completely desolate. I was getting high. I didn't know where to go. I'd spent so much time in prison, and I had lost so much, that I didn't have the capabilities of getting a normal life.

I came back and I got put back into the Ada County Jail. I just felt like giving up. I'd already done thirteen years, and I didn't have any hope, and I hung myself.

The cop that cut me down was the first time a cop had ever been nice to me. He was crying when I opened my eyes, and he was like, I can't believe you would do this to yourself.

I called my Grandpa, and I was like, Grandpa, I just want to give up. I don't have anywhere to go. I don't have a life. I don't want to be alive anymore.

My grandfather's Christian, like Christian as Christian can be. In prison, I had started getting into witchcraft a lot. I was using it I guess as an excuse to try to escape my reality. I was heavily influenced on the dark arts and practicing magic and thinking that was going to give me control over my life. I had always told him, I am never going to be a Christian so just stop trying. I don't want to be like anybody that's like that.

When I called him, my Grandpa was like, If you don't care about your life, and you love me at all, then you should say you accept God as your savior.

I was like, Man, I don't want to do that. And he was like, It's an insurance policy. It can't hurt you. It's just hurting your pride, so say it. I was like, Okay, I'll say it for you, Grandpa. I don't mean it but I'll say it.

The next day my Grandpa sent me a Bible. I was pretty pissed off about it, but I read this Bible sitting inside of the medical isolation ward. I started reading it because I wanted to know why I hated Christians so much, and I wanted to use it against my Grandpa, like, Let me show you the stuff I found in your Bible's fake, this is why. But instead, I kept reading it, and I kept reading it, and I kind of found hope. And the more I read it, the better I got. Just because it was uplifting inside of me to have a purpose. And I felt like it was the right thing, because I started reading this Bible, and I started learning stuff, and I started telling the other girls that I had known in prison, like, Hey, let me help you, read this, tell me what you think.

I'm always going to be affected by my time in Seg. I wear the scars on my arms and I have to look at them every day. But it reminds me that I made it through that. And it also taught me that I valued my family and being around my family more than anything in the world. Because that's all I wanted when I was away from them. I just wanted my family. I'm grateful that I'm out of it, and I'll never go back to it.

I just want people to know that just because people are in there doesn't make them bad people. And that if anybody ever thinks about one person suffering, think about people in solitary.

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.

ANDREA!! What a BEAUTIFUL testimony of Gods grace on our lives !!
Thank you for sharing from your heart youre such a
Beautiful Angel????

Great story. Keep up the good work you and Grandpa are doing.

Thank you so much.

I spent 8 months in solitary, without a bible. It was a taste of hell. Everyone there had been abused and needed to forgive someone. We were there as a warning to forgive or we would end up in hell. Jesus said if we dont forgive others their sins against us God wont forgive us. I was a strong believer when I went in. I realized solitary was an opportunity to have a private audience with God. The first thought I had was Good now I can ask God all my questions. unfortunately most people are like this author who do NOT have a relationship; with God and often never realize that THAT is why he put them there to develop it. The mental health people are atheists. When someone hears voices, which is God or demons, they are told they are mentally ill they are hallucinating, and they need drugs. God does not want them on drugs you need a clear head to pray. This is a waste of time. I wrote a book I would like seen given to ALL prisoners to explain this.

It is free on my website and I want to see the Supreme Court rule that ALL people have a right to a bible in jail, so they can get to know God. I want all prisoners to have a bible, instrument (guitar or piano) and a kitten, in solitary. These are the tools they need to develop a relationship with God and prepare for ministry This should take no more than 1-2 years and THEN they should be substitute teachers go to schools and tell kids NOT to do whatever they did use drugs, rob, join gangs, etc. EVERYONE makes mistakes in life. What we need to do is analyze our life figure out what we did wrong and then ask WHO can benefit from this testimony Youth can benefit. Someone else got a prophecy that God is going to raise up evangelists from the prisons and psych wards. THEY have the most powerful and inspirational testimony if God can change a mass murderer, then anyone can be forgiven and will have hope.

Manual for Transformational Healing Gods Answer to Psychiatry

God had sent me into the psych system after I became a Christian to be a witness against it and write this book exposing their atheism, genocide by the drugs which are deadly by design, and it tells how to heal mental illness through prayer/worship. I spent over 7 years in various psych wards, on the drugs. I know many who died from them. They are torture. They turn people into vegetables. Every time I got off them I had to pray for Jesus to restore me and heal my mind, which He did.

see my free books, articles & music on my website <http://www.1prophetspeaks.com>

THE PRISONERS HANDBOOK GODs help for those in jail and solitary

Vision for Transformation of the Criminal Justice System

Spiritual Bootcamp my experience in solitary launching prayers

Manual for Transformational Healing Gods Answer to Psychiatry

Her name was Nancy Webster on solitary confinement, suicide & psych wards

Listen to:

<http://www.1prophetspeaks.com/ASK.mp3>

This song explains the Gospel and tells people to ASK Jesus into their heart to be born again.

<http://www.1prophetspeaks.com/RESTORATIONSONGS.mp3>

This series of songs revived me when I recorded it. It is a prayer.

<http://www.1prophetspeaks.com/JOYANGELFOOD12string2.mp3>

This song is a love song from God.

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