

Solitary Watch

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://solitarywatch.org/2015/02/24/voices-from-solitary-i-am-somebodys-daughter/>

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close

Search

close

close

by [Voices from Solitary](#) | February 24, 2015

The following account is by Nicole Natschke, who was incarcerated at Illinois Logan Correctional Facility, where she spent significant time including one year straight in segregation. Logan, which is about three hours south of Chicago, was repurposed from a mens prison to imprison women from the shuttered Dwight and Lincoln Correctional Centers. The prison, which has a rated capacity of 1,106, currently holds [1,950 people](#). A December 2014 [report](#) by the [John Howard Association](#) described the dismal conditions at the overcrowded [and] underresourced prison.

*Natschke was originally scheduled to be released in December 2014 after 14 months in prison, but her segregation sentence extended her time in prison. Shortly after her arrival in segregation, a woman in the adjoining cell committed suicide. Her account, titled *Solitary Confinement Is Torture*, shows that even a few weeks or months in solitary confinement can have dire consequences on peoples physical and mental well-being. Nicole Natschke returned twenty-one while behind bars and celebrated her twenty-second birthday in solitary. She was released in late 2015. Victoria Law*

My name is Nicole Natschke. I am currently housed in segregation at Logan Correctional Facility in Illinois. Here at this fine institution, we are locked down 24 hours a day. We shower every four days *maybe*. If we act up, they sometimes refuse to shower you, although thats against regulations. Ive gone 12 days without a shower. Now that we have a new warden, the rules have changed. Before she started working here, for example, you would not be segregated for an unauthorized movement. Now, you must do two months in this miserable place. You would think segregation is supposed to be for violent offenders? No, now everyone comes to segregation. My cellmate, Gina, was feeling homicidal and asked for a mental health evaluation. Instead, they threw her in segregation and said she refused housing. When you refuse housing, they give you three months segregation. Gina has been in segregation for nine days and still has no sheets or blankets because they lost some of her property. She sleeps on the cold, plastic mattress. I share one of my blankets. All these non-violent offenses and people are doing a *very long* time in segregation. Gina has also never, not once, gotten into trouble in the four years shes been incarcerated! You want to know what violent offenses carry? They carry the *least* amount of time in segregation. If you get into a fight, youll do 15 days in seg. If you assault someone, youll do 30 days. *Everything* non-violent carries more than 30 days in seg!

You cant even ask for mental help because theyll throw you in segregation. I am in here because I had a seizure and was handcuffed and thrown into a wall by a lieutenant. I was not supposed to be handcuffed because I just had a seizure. I flipped out, panicked and spit on him. Ive been in segregation six months. I shouldve went home December 3, 2014, but they are keeping me here until August 3, 2015. I have to be in segregation the whole time. The past six months have been hell. Ive seen my friend commit suicide next door to me. While the police were waiting for her body to be transferred, they made jokes about how now theres more bed space. My friend RIP. Shortybang shouldnt have even been in segregation. The police ignored her cries for help. They still ignore people when people say they are suicidal or homicidal. They dont see us as someones daughter, mother, or sister. They see us as a number, as bed space, as criminals. Ive talked to many women in this prison and I havent met one yet who hasnt been abused, raped, etc., in their life. Ive heard the worst stories. I dont know about other women, but when Im in segregation, alone, locked in this six foot by ten foot cell for 24 hours per day, I start thinking about my life. I have a *very* messed-up past. Mainly when I was younger, but that wasnt that long ago.

I will turn twenty-two in seg on April 6th. Long periods of solitary confinement are not healthy, especially for women like me who have severe PTSD and depression. Ive attempted suicide so many times I lost count! Now what makes anyone think its okay to put me alone in a cell for over a year? You might think Im being treated by a psychiatrist? Yes, but she *refuses* to put me on the correct medications. I see the psychiatrist through a TV once every two months, maybe, and she refuses to look at my records and see that I need certain medications. So, if Im having severe issues just trying to survive day by day, I know others are as well. Thats why so many people are yelling constantly that theyre suicidal. This is a very depressing place.

Another serious issue, medical. I have been begging to see the doctor for six months since I got in segregation. I wrote grievances about health care in segregation. I hope and pray that things will change back here. Even something as simple as how officers treat us would change a lot. Ill do whatever I can from the inside and hope people listen to what I have to say. Just because I made one mistake in life doesnt mean I deserve this suffering. I am somebodys daughter. I have a great family. I should be home. I want to stop this from

happening to others.

To help us keep in touch with thousands of people in solitary confinement, some of whom have no other contact with the world outside their cells, please consider a donation to our [Lifelines to Solitary](#) project.

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.

My heart goes out to you. Many people care deeply for you and others who are in your situation. You are correct, no woman/man deserves to be in solitary confinement no matter the crime, many people agree with you many many people. Our prison policies have failed and there are many people working on this, trying to bring about change. You ARE part of that change. Thank you for your efforts by writing your wonderfully crafted letter. You have a gift for writing and you can use that always. Many are working to bring about change and to open up the conversation around this issue. Our failed prison policies, failed lengthy mandatory minimums not commensurate with the crime, the use of solitary confinement (studies dating back to Dickens state that solitary is torture and yet we use it). I have been posting on this subject whenever and wherever I can, for years now.

The fact that first time nonviolent offenders get thrown into solitary for 30, 60 or 260 days (one young man I know who was a first time nonviolent offender got 260 days cruel) that we stand by and allow this to happen is appalling, beyond comprehension. Thank you for your letter. Thank you for your efforts to bring about change. We cannot lock our fellow citizens away in solitary confinement. Of this I have no doubt.

It is my heart's belief that we CANNOT do this any longer. This has got to end and it will. People feel the pain and the insanity, never doubt that people care, we just need more people to care and they will only care when they hear more stories. Have your cellies send their stories in too, more and more and keep doing it until you fill a book and another one and another one. Thank you. You have a good heart and NO ONE can take that away from you. You are doing something good. Keep it up and someday please god someday no woman/man will have to ever endure solitary confinement in any American prison ever. This is what WE are calling for. NO SOLITARY CONFINEMENT EVER.

Peace to you. Keep writing and reading. You will and ARE making a difference. I wish you peace all the days of your good life.

You can help make a difference! Please sign to urge limited use of solitary.

<http://www.thepetitionsite.com/586/993/683/urge-limited-use-of-solitary-confinement-in-us-prisons/>

We are all monsters by passive assent for not rising up and crushing a system that implements what are human atrocities and torture.

Love u baby sis..ul get thru it..I kno its tough I went thru it all too..everything she said in here I dont doubt one bit Cuz its the same in both the male prisons I went to

Please see my FB page and sign my White House petition to reform solitary confinement! Please repost it everywhere you can.

I just sealed a card to her. I understand what she is going through. Not because i have been through it myself, but through a man, the father of one of my grandsons has been going through it for over 9 years, and 4 years at juvy before that. He has done over 4 years in segregation and I know how much effort it took to help him keep his head screwed on. A couple weeks ago he was thrown back in for a third time and doesnt know for how long. He knows was filed against him by a guard with a grudge. he wasnt allowed to be at the hearing. The guard wasnt there either so someone else, who absolutely nothing about anything stood in his place and a decision was made. Ironically he had just reached the place where he was allowed to make his very first phone call ever and we had 2 weeks of being able to talk. Now its gone and will have to start all over. He wants to bring charges against them for doing this. I have yet to find a way to help him with this.

My computer keeps dumping my reply. I will try to keep this short then. My website <http://mynameisjamie.net> has a new post, from the book Im writing Insideout in the archive section is my latest post nightmare

About being in solitary and waking each day as if from a nightmare. Now, before it dumps it again . . .

Im a little scared to send a card. What if the guards pick on her for receiving sympathy mail?

No Jason, it will be ok. The guards dont need a reason to harrass. It is actually better if they know she has a lot of support behind her. They have to be careful then. The people who dont have any support, they can do anything they want to them and they no there will be no recourse. its good that she has solitary watch behind her.

Thank you! Please sign my petition on my Facebook page to reform solitary! Its off to such a slow start. Must have signatures to force the White House to comment on it! Theres about ten people with my name but only one will have a green We the People square next to a petition. Please repost it THANK YOU!

Jason, I havent been back to Discus lately, so i didnt read this comment. I write in so many places they sometimes get lost. Do you still have that petition going? If you do, go to my website, <http://mynameisjamie.net> and leave a comment on the opening page and also put a link to the petition there so that others who come there can see it. Also if you fill out the contact form it goes into a folder of readers who will find out info about the book I am writing InsideOut. Youll read about it on that opening page. Ill do what I can to share the link with my readers and SM

Im kind of a tech dummy so I couldnt find your comment section. But you can find me on my new face book page, which I didnt have when we talked last. And Im learning how to put links in emails so here ya go. Petition is going nowhere but when it expires in a few days I will reword it and start again. <https://petitions.whitehouse.gov/petition/reform-solitary-confinement-so-only-worst-worst-are-locked-not-helpless-and-nonviolent> Sincerely,Jason Nissan Original Message

So this is the land of the free we are all supposed to be proud of.

This hasnt been the land of the free in a long time, and there hasnt been a lot happening to be proud of. Frankly it scares me, knowing my grandchildren will be left with the mess being created today.

So glad Nicole reached out to us. Ill write her today.

P.O. Box 11374
Washington, DC 20008

info@solitarywatch.org

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