

# Solitary Watch

## Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://solitarywatch.org/2016/08/04/at-virginias-supermax-prisons-isolation-and-abuse-persist-despite-reforms/>

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by [Katie Rose Quandt and Jack Denton](#) | August 4, 2016

Red Onion State Prison, a supermax complex in the southwest corner of Virginia near the Kentucky border, has long had a reputation as one of the harshest prisons in the nation. So when in 2011 the Virginia Department of Corrections (VADOC) announced it was initiating major reforms at Red Onion and nearby Wallens Ridge State Prison, the news was applauded by officials and advocates alike.

At the heart of the reforms was the new [Administrative Segregation Step-Down Program](#), which aimed to provide a path for men to work their way out of solitary confinement and back into the general prison population. After five years, the VADOC reported it had successfully [reduced the segregated population](#) of its two supermax prisons by 72 percent, and decreased the grievances filed by men at Red Onion by 71 percent.

VADOCs reported solitary reduction has been celebrated not only by the department itself, but also by state and even federal officials. In a 2013 [op-ed in the Washington Post](#), State Delegate Patrick Hope and State Senator Adam Ebbin who pushed for the reforms praised Virginia's dramatic turnaround in philosophy and treatment of prisoners in solitary confinement. Virginia Governor Terry McAuliffe said the Step-Down program shows Virginia to be at the forefront of prison reform and re-entry efforts. The [program was praised](#) by the Southern Legislative Conference a 15-member council of state governments as a unique, creative and effective approach, and [highlighted as a case study](#) in the U.S. Department of Justice's January 2016 report on solitary confinement.

There can be no doubt that some of the men held at Red Onion and Wallens Ridge have managed to escape long-term solitary confinement by following the path set out by the Step-Down program. Yet a deeper look at the program, and at conditions at the two prisons, suggests that the extent of the reforms has been overstated.

### Behind the Numbers

In [press releases](#) and in correspondence with Solitary Watch, VADOC repeatedly offers the same statistic: There were 511 individuals in long-term administrative segregation in 2011, and by 2016 all but 84 of them had completed the program and transitioned to general population housing. While 427 people working their way out of segregation is certainly a positive development, VADOC's choice of statistics leaves two questions unanswered: How many people are actually housed in long-term solitary (not just counting those who have been there since 2011) and what are their lives like?

After pressing VADOC, Solitary Watch received further clarification on the first question from Community Relations Coordinator Greg Carter, who said in July there were 242 people in various forms of segregation in Red Onion and Wallens Ridge. While this is still an improvement from the 511 in 2011, it is much higher than the 84 repeatedly cited by VADOC.

What's more, men housed in segregation in Red Onion and Wallens Ridge say they continue to suffer cruel and inhumane treatment.

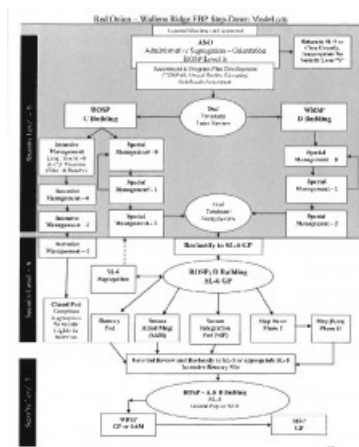
This inconsistency illustrates a major pitfall involved with solitary reform: Reported numbers can be misleading, and often don't tell the whole story. This is not a problem unique to Virginia. In states like [New York](#) and [Colorado](#) as well, reforms have been less extensive than advertised, in part because corrections departments have reported people as out of segregation who are in fact still in solitary-like conditions.

Sometimes the confusing or conflicting information is based on terminology. One week before Greg Carter told Solitary Watch that 242 people remain in long-term segregation, Virginia Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security Brian Moran assured the signers of an ACLU of Virginia petition that VADOC does not utilize solitary confinement, which is defined as the isolation of offenders with no human contact. He said the state had previously used something called administrative segregation, and currently uses restrictive housing, but that both allow for communication with staff and other offenders.

Gay Gardner of Interfaith Action for Human Rights (IAHR) a religious coalition that opposes long-term solitary, said Moran's response is typical of VADOC. She says the department has always denied that it uses solitary confinement, and that this is not the first time it has changed its labels for various types of segregation. What concerns us is confining people to their cells for 23 or 24 hours a day, whatever they choose to call that, Gardner wrote in an email to advocates. She said the claim that all men incarcerated at Red Onion and Wallens

Ridge have human contact defies credulity, adding, That can be true only if they have a different definition of contact than most normal people do.

## No Way Out



VADOC added a host of complex classifications and labels when it introduced the Step-Down program in 2011. The mindboggling flowchart that appears at left (click to enlarge), which is published in an [official Virginia corrections document](#), demonstrates the ways in which some men may work their way over many years back into general population, while many others languish in official-sounding classifications that are nothing more than the same old solitary.

Under VADOC's new Step-Down model, those in segregation are placed on one of two tracks: Special Management (SM) for those who pose a lower risk, and Intensive Management (IM) for those considered more dangerous. According to [prison documents](#) and VADOC's response to Solitary Watch, those who advance down the IM track can never re-enter the general prison population and must remain for the rest of their sentences in a closed pod where they spend 23 hours a day locked in a cell.

Carter told Solitary Watch that there are currently 86 people on the IM track, 34 of whom have advanced as far as they can to Level-6 Closed Pod. There is no opportunity for these 34 men to advance to a lower security, and they are ineligible to request reclassification from IM to SM.

People [can be placed in IM](#) not only for having a violent history, but also for having ever attempted a serious and planned escape, or for having a history of high profile crimes and/or significant media attention, which VADOC says puts them in danger from other offenders due to their notoriety.

Robert W (a pseudonym) is one of several men who wrote to IAHR from a seemingly never-ending stint in segregation. He says he ended up in seg after a fight with another prisoner at Sussex I State Prison in 2012, to which 13 guards responded. According to Robert, the group of guards restrained the other man and began kicking, punching, and spraying him with pepper spray. In an attempt to stop the beating, Robert says he attacked one of the guards, earning himself an indictment of aggravated malicious wounding of a corrections officer and reclassification to segregation, where he was assigned to the Intensive Management (IM) track.

From his Closed Pod cell, Robert W. questioned the logic behind the IM classification that some prisoners are too dangerous to ever return to general population, even after completing programming and remaining infraction-free for years. All prisoners in the supermaxes have a past history of violent crimes! he wrote. If that's a justification for IM, then all of us would be there.

A December 2015 petition written by former Red Onion prisoner Kelvin Khaysi Canada (who has since been transferred out of state) and [signed by 74 others](#) states that D6-Pod (another name for IM Closed Pod) is classified as general population, but operationally it's synonymous to segregation. The only difference between D6-Pod and actual segregation is that D6-Pod prisoners can now have contact visits, but they have to be shackled to a security chair for the duration of this contact visit. He added that individuals held at this level spend 23 hours a day in their cells, with one hour of recreation in a dog cage.

Roberts and Canada's descriptions line up with [official VADOC documents](#), which state that IM offenders in Level 6 will continue to be managed per Special Housing Guidelines policy to include single celled housing, segregated recreation, and out of cell shackles except for the pod workers. Canada wrote that IM status and D6-Pod is nothing but a de facto long-term segregation program.

D6-Pod is not the only category of long-term solitary where people in Virginia get stuck as they attempt to step down out of segregation. [There are also long-term categories](#) for men who move from the SM track into protective custody (called Secured Allied Management Pod, or SAM), and a special pod for people who repeatedly commit minor violations with the goal of staying in segregation (called Secure Integrated Pod, or SIP). Men in these pods live in single-celled housing with meals eaten in cell.

## Stepping Down and Slipping Up

Even the lucky ones who make it into the Step-Down program struggle to work their way back to general population.

Canada's petition alleges that participants in the middle of the Step-Down program are frequently reclassified back to Segregation Level 0 security for vindictive or retaliatory reasons without giving that prisoner a due process hearing to challenge his status reduction. He wrote that this practice keeps recycling prisoners through this program over, and over, and over again, preventing some men from making any real progress for years and years with no end, which is nothing but de facto/ long-term segregation.

Kevin Snodgrass reports getting caught in just such a cycle of progress and setbacks after his placement in Red Onion solitary

confinement in 2013. On at least two occasions, he has spent months working through a required set of seven journals called the Challenge Series and entered the Step-Down program, only to get bumped back to level 0 of segregation for infractions. He alleges these setbacks are retaliation for filing grievances. Each time he moves backwards, he has to re-complete the entire Challenge Series. In May, his counselor gave him paperwork listing his goal year for reintegration into the general prison population as 2025.

Snodgrass has brought several lawsuits against VADOC and its staff. In one suit from 2014, he alleged that staff told him he needed to complete the final two books of the Challenge Series before he could be released from segregation, but then [took more than 100 days](#) to provide him with the books. That case was dismissed in the US District Court of the Western District of Virginia, with the judge determining that Snodgrass conditions were not atypical enough to qualify as significant hardship. In the decision, the judge cited precedent from a 1997 case that failed to find significant hardship when prisoners were held in segregation for six months amid vermin, human waste, flooding toilet, excessive heat; and dirty clothing, linens, and bedding. Unless Snodgrass could demonstrate worse conditions than that, he wasn't going to get anywhere in court.

Khaysi Canada says Snodgrass experience is a common one, and provided IAHR with the names and information of 31 men whom he says have been fallen backwards after entering the Step-Down program.

VADOC does not report on the number of people who have been pulled out of the Step-Down program due to infractions, but reports that [just 15 individuals](#) who completed the program have since returned to segregation.

### **Abusive Treatment Continues**

The number of people returning to general population is not the only VADOC statistic disputed by those held in segregation in Virginia. VADOC also notes a steep reduction in the number of grievances filed by incarcerated individuals. Prison officials and reform-minded politicians present the numbers as evidence that abuses in Red Onion and Wallens Ridge have been curbed significantly, but some of the men held there tell a different story.

Robert W. wrote that requests for complaint forms are often met with responses like, You are not going to write me or my officers up, or false promises to bring forms later. Robert said that Red Onion Warden Earl Barksdale is aware of this unwritten policy, yet he declines to stop this practice, despite the fact that VADOC policy requires [24 hour access](#) to emergency grievance forms. Multiple men at Red Onion, including Kevin Snodgrass, allege that correctional officers go so far as to retaliate against individuals who file complaints by planting knives and homemade shanks in cells. Five months after he filed a lawsuit and encouraged others to submit grievances, Bradley Maxwell was placed in segregation for nearly two years for allegedly punching another prisoner even though the other prisoner denied being attacked.

The only remedy available to prisoners is to contact their families or outside sources and have them contact VADOC Director Harold Clark's office and complain on their behalf, Robert said. VADOC has not yet responded to a request for comment on these allegations.

And the incarcerated men who wrote to IAHR say there are plenty of abuses that are deserving of grievances. Nearly everyone reported witnessing or experiencing physical abuse, the capricious withholding of recreation time and showers, or manipulation of food. These reports contradict praise from the Department of Justice, which [wrote that](#) the warden, his executive team, and all staff completed training to acquire effective communication and strategies to motivate change. Jack Bush, co-developer of [Thinking for a Change](#), a curriculum used in the Step-Down program, [wrote for NPR](#) that Red Onion is in the process of changing from what had been a culture of control and punishment into a culture of control and hope. Prison officers and counselors are trained to treat prisoners with respect.

Yet Maxwell says that while in solitary confinement, he was slammed down on the floor, his testicles and arms twisted and crushed. All of his mail and documents disappeared when he was locked up, he contends. You know, I'm a mentally strong guy, he wrote, But I swear, I feel like I'm about to lose my mind. I can't win, I can't even move.

William Griffin told IAHR that officers frequently try to trick prisoners out of their recreation and showers. This is done by trying to tiptoe through the pod with the recreation and showers list at 5:35 in the morning when they know that most guys are still asleep, he wrote. They don't announce that they are taking up the rec and shower list, nor do they stop at your cell door to ask either. They just walk past and if you're not at your door to yell out, they mark you down as refusal. If an inmate tries to wake up another inmate, he is punished by being deprived of recreation/shower. Khaysi Canada told IAHR that some seriously ill men have not been outside in two years or taken a shower in six months.

Many men complained of being underfed while locked in solitary. Kevin Snodgrass has lost more than 33 pounds in solitary confinement. Another man said he is frequently denied dinner without explanation at Red Onion, causing him to lose more than ten pounds in sixty days. I would make a tort claim of cruel and unusual punishment if I knew how, he wrote.

Canada wrote in his petition that K9 officers will recklessly usher their dogs into a crowd of prisoners where a fight is taking place, and permit their dog to attack the wrong prisoner or even the involved prisoner who's lying on the floor and/or ground non-combative. Griffin has heard officers antagonize prisoners with comments like, You guys need to start fighting or something because we don't have anything to do, or Our dogs are bored. When are you guys going to give them something to sink their teeth into?

One anonymous man told IAHR that in 2015, while he was in solitary, his food slot was opened and he was sprayed in the face with mace by a lieutenant and unit manager. They told him if he reported the incident, they would beat my nigger ass.

Incarcerated men say that lack of transparency contributes to praise of the Step-Down program overshadowing the abuses that are still a major part of life for prisoners in the Virginia supermaxes.

VADOC told IAHR that a group of DOC executive staff members and specialists called the External Review Team visits Red Onion twice a year to review the status of everyone in the Step Down Program.

A team does in fact visit Red Onion prison twice a year, Robert acknowledged, but the prisoners that they speak to are handpicked by

Red Onion officials, so they get an exaggerated, sugar coated version about what is really going on. Another long-term Wallens Ridge inmate wrote, When Richmond comes to inspect, they add more to the meals to make it seem that this is an everyday meal, but truthfully we are being fed like animals.

## Policy and Practice

In theory, the Step-Down program is a positive development, and is drastically needed: In 2011, more than two-thirds of people in Red Onion were held in solitary confinement often for years or decades straight prompting the Legal Aid Justice Center to [request a federal investigation](#) in 2012.

Some men truly have used the program to work their way back to general population. And those who succeed are, of course, less likely to file grievances or write to advocates.

However, it does appear even as some men do manage to step down to general population, the actual number of people in long-term solitary remains much higher than VADOC implies. Sister Beth Davies, a Catholic nun and addictions counselor who has spent years assisting both prisoners and corrections officers in Red Onion and Wallens Ridge, called the Step-Down program a lot of good press, but characterized the programs implementation as having strayed from the policy's intent.

I do think that the fundamental principles of the [Step-Down] program (in its essence) are good and could bring about a pivotal change in the lives of those that choose to take it seriously, wrote William Griffin, who is currently incarcerated in Wallens Ridge. However, in practice, to put it bluntly, I think it's a joke!

Delegate Patrick Hope told Solitary Watch, I think we have to take every complaint seriously. I'm planning on trying to meet with the department soon and try get some answers. However, he emphasized VADOC's claim of a 70 percent drop in solitary confinement at Red Onion and Wallens Ridge since 2011, adding I don't think that you should overlook that they've made some significant progress.

VADOC officials had promised to meet with members of IAHR and other advocacy groups, along with state legislators, to discuss concerns about the Step-Down program and conditions at the states supermax prisons. The meeting, scheduled for yesterday, was cancelled with one days notice.

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by [Juan Moreno Haines](#)

October 25, 2022

by [Solitary Watch Guest Author](#)

October 13, 2022

by [Vaidya Gullapalli](#)

September 29, 2022

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My son arrived at Wallens Ridge SP last week on 5Sept2018, I believe on 12Sept2018 I talked to him he told me when he arrived at the prison Major Anderson came to him and said, You're going to the hole! Prepare to be there for at least 6 mos! My son had gotten into some trouble at Hampton Roads Regional Jail a few months prior (which turned out to be a prank) Major Anderson told my son that if he did something like that at Wallens Ridge SP, they were going to kill him one of the unit managers asked my son if he was in a gang? My son said, no the U/M said, Well I'm not gonna label you right now, but if I find out you lied to me I'm gonna plant a shank in your cell! Then you will be locked down for good! My son is black! The majority of the staff at WRSP is of course white I think the staff there are afraid of the inmates so they resort to scare tactics to try to get the inmates in line I think the whole prison staff need to go back to The Academy and get a refresher course for learning how to deal with inmates, IPC skills, and Effective Communication I think they are under the impression that the inmates that come to that prison have little resources in the world, and that nobody cares for, nor has their backs! WRSP you absolutely WILL NOT treat my son like this! #sheready #youready

I generally keep my opinions to myself in the social media world, but this touches a very sore spot with me. Unlike most here, I know of the abuse and corruption going on in the vdoc. The pic that is painted for the general public is far from the life this is endured behind the walls of these prisons. I say this because I have done prison time in VA and witnessed it first hand. I've seen the shanks planted by guards for retaliation over grievance filed. I've watched inmates stomped out in their cells by guards over nothing. And not some dangerous

viloent inmate. A 57 year old man that was already partially paralyzed from a stroke. And in prison on a pot charge. Sure there are some bad guys in prison. But unless you have been there, I will assure u there are a lot of decent men just like the ones most all of us associate with at work or in our communitys every day that made one mistake or got caught up in vas wonderful judicial system. This picture painted of red onion only houses the worst of the worst makes me boil inside every time I read or hear it. There is a boy, I call him that because to me he is at 24 yrs old, as we speak from Covington va that was sent to prison for stealing a small amount of food. He had no real family and would even try to get put in jail on small charges in the winter to have somewhere warm to stay. Anyway my point is, this guy had no one to sent him money for food hygiene or any other needs in prison. And yes you have to have those things. Once again if anyone believes vdoc takes care of all of that then once again you dont know the prison system. This guy would go threw the lunch line twice if he could a lot of days because he was hungry . After getting caught doing so several times and wrote up for it he was sent to red onion because of this and this alone. So here is a prime example of one of the worst of the worst inmates they speak of. Man was hungry and got sent to red onion. I witnessed this. I could go on all night with storys but I wont. Im all about a eye for a eye and just punishment, but thats not what we have here. Trust me. Im not a carrer criminal. Only time ever in prison. One mistake. But it was a real eye opener. Its hard to be a captive and witness guards and staff that are suppose to be symbols of the law and justice system , openly, daily, hourly, commit , in no other terms crimes in many cases worse than the crime of some of the men they guard. It truly is a broken system.

The politically correct butt hurts, the princess pouty panties go into mental melt down and have temper tantrums when complaining about the death penalty. Now these same monkeys are actually complaining about these animals serving time in seg! Theyre in seg due to their own actions! Not being able to exist in general population, you morons, or did you miss the part where the one complaining animal admitted to trying the slash another prisoners throat?

Pull your collective heads out of your collective liberal, PC asses OR join us in pushing for more crimes being declared capital offenses, pushing for quicker punishment, i.e executions to decrease the prison popation.

Bunch of PC, weak, cowardly, pussified, liberal whiners.

No need to push for laws to execute prisoners quicker to decrease the prison population since correctional officers kill prisoners on their own with impunity.

This Solitary Watch article on Virginias Supermax Red Onion State Prison [ROSP], a prison one prison guard characterized to a prisoner as a place where crooks watch over crooks and another guard said a investigation waiting to happen. Was described by Solitary Watch as one of the harshest prisons in the nation. This descriptive expression by Solitary Watch is another example of the age old semantic Achilles Heel plaguing progressive hearts and minds who despite the motivational intent of exposing governments behavior within the prison environment end up giving it cover and enabling it. Because their word choice confuses and distorts the condition their efforts intend on exposing

Red Onion State Prison is a lawless prison where prison officials, its rank and file guards in its operation break every law imaginable and violate each and every aspect of their very own Virginia Department of Corrections procedures and policies. [VADOC]. Prisons by definition are legal constructs. This simply means each and every fact of the prison condition is because of law and defined by law ROSP isnt any different. A prisoner is in prison because of the dictates of law. The prison guard is able to physically touch a prisoner and the totality of the relationship a prisoner has with prison is because law authorizes it. Law defines it. The parameters, context and extent of the contact and relationship come into existence because of law. So the conditions at ROSP, Solitary Watch attempted to expose in this article are not a mere question of harshness. But are narratives of law and in certain cases criminal violations by ROSP officials and its rank and file guards and this definitive clarity of description is what Solitary Watch, in its work should have given us. The problem with works as Solitary Watchs article on ROSP is it rehabilitates and decriminalizes governmental malfeasance by reducing it to a moral hazard ambiguity, an academic indulgence of prisons, as conventional wisdom supposes are expected to be harsh and VADOC and its ROSP operatives as a matter of fact welcome the harshness critique because not only does it let them off the hook, that conditions at ROSP which Solitary Watch per virtue of its work finds offensive are a result of prison officials breaking the law, behaving with impunity above the law and violating their own VADOC procedures and policies. But in a perverse manner endows ROSP with a notoriety mystique that governmental organized violence which prison is a foot soldier, strives to assert. The imperatives of Solitary Watch- type works present the expectation but as evidenced in its ROSP article fail and neglect to give us the conclusion that: Red Onion State Prison must be investigated by an independent agency, if the general public, not only is to have faith but maintain faith in government. Because the ROSP question is quintessentially that of criminality, prison officials behaving criminally.

Solitary Watch omitted that the prison policy in question also known as Step Down Program is an arbitrary construct, which despite having the weight of statutory law is also susceptible as any other law to the question: Is the law constitutional. Presently over 30 ROSP prisoners detained in Administrative-Segregation are challenging the law in Federal Court for the Western District of Virginia.

Solitary Watch didnt delve into the fact that the post 2011 decrease in the number of prisoners detained at ROSP Administration-Segregation had as much to do with the fact, VADOC transformed half of ROSPs four buildings back to its original quasi-general population operational model. Had Solitary Watch factored this into its work, it would have discovered that since opening in August and September of 1998, VADOC hasnt been able to resolve what it needs ROSP for and subsequently needs it to be, besides the obvious economic role ROSP plays in the economic depressed, rural and politically marginalized region of Southwest Virginia. This bureaucratic vacillation by VADOC has only confirmed the fundamental objection opponents of ROSP have expressed all along that not only doesnt VADOC need ROSP but it built it against the conclusions and findings By the Virginia Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission in its 1985 and 1986 reports on August 4th-5th, 1984; uprising at ROSPs precursor, Mecklenburg Correctional Center that VADOC shouldnt confine at one place its so-called worst of the worst.

If as Solitary Watch writes VADOC is reducing confinement of prisoners in Administrative-Segregation [AdSeg] why didnt it obtain the current VADOC rate for placing prisoners in AdSeg. And for what in contrast with pre-2011 rates and reasons. Also what are the figures for prisoners held in AdSeg. in other Virginia prisons i.e Wallens Ridge, River North, Green Rock, Keen Mountain, Pocahontas, Augusta, Sussex I and II to name some of the major ones. What this would have revealed is the AdSeg. practice in Virginia is arbitrary. Detention and confinement in Virginias AdSeg. varies from prison to prison. Based on an arcane calculus which falls in the all too familiar dynamic of: Vindictiveness of prison officials who have scores to settle against certain prisoners for 20 and 30 year old acts and allegations. So VADOC due process policies are misapplied, documents are falsified, infractions are fraudulently concocted against prisoners to effect placement in AdSeg. which are all unlawful and in some cases criminal acts by prison officials. Other factors are:



Racism, where White prisoners are not generally subjected to the extremity of AdSeg. and relative length of confinement as Black and Latino prisoners for identical acts and allegations. Also: Black, White and Latino prisoners from urban areas of Eastern, Central and Northern Virginia, bear the brunt of AdSeg. and are more likely to be transferred to the rural prisons of Red Onion and Wallens Ridge AdSeg. in contrast with prisoners from rural Virginia. The urban bias is an unchallenged fact. But the more implicit insidious suggestion is, the mainly Black and Latino staff of prisons in non-rural areas are incapable of managing urban prisoners.

Solitary Watch in this article shies away from calling for an independent criminal investigation into criminality and malfeasance that is the operative conduct of ROSP officials and its rank and file guards:

ROSP guards assaulting and battering prisoners who are handcuffed behind their backs, shackled and kneeling. See [rebuttal to petitioner response, Canada v. Methena 7:13-cv00322 also Re: Complaint of Abuse and Misuse of Restraints DOC-2013-401055].

Also Asiatic Allah #1030654 on 7/15/15; punched in the face and beaten by ROSP guard upon arrival at ROSP from Augusta C.C.

Also D Freeman #1108494 in 2015; assaulted and beaten up by prison guards at ROSP-B/3 Pod.

Also T James on 7/29/15; prison guards broke his hand while he was handcuffed and shackled at ROSP B/3-31 Pod.

Also Andre Goodwin #1008696 on 6/16/15; assaulted in ROSP-C/3 Pod by unidentified guards.

The practice and racist totem of ROSP; all white K-9 Corp sizing attack dogs on a majority Black and urban population, reminiscent of White police officers behavior during the anti-Segregation struggles of the Civil Rights Movement.

The unlawful practice of ROSP guards denying prisoners meals and criminal acts of ROSP guards tampering with prisoners meals.

The unlawful act of ROSP guards denying prisoners showers for months on end despite VADOC AdSeg. policy mandate prisoners are given showers 3 times per week.

The unlawful practice of denying AdSeg. prisoners outside exercise for months on end, 8-9 months straight.

The misuse of Stripped Cells and unlawful practice of depriving prisoners property.

The unlawful practice of deploying OC Pepper gas inside the confines of a 810 foot cell without regard for prisoners held in windowless cells.

The unlawful practice of using food as punishment by skimping and not providing the VADOC Master Menu and Food Service Manual required portions to AdSeg. prisoners.

The unlawful practice of chaining prisoners wrists to ankles, thereby denying the prisoner the ability to stand upright for hours on end.

The unlawful and unethical treatment of Mental Health prisoners confined at ROSP AdSeg. where they are subjected to denial of showers, outside exercise, food, meals tampered with, deprived of property, taunted, insulted, provoked by ROSP guards and once they react, they are gassed with OC Pepper Gas, put on Stripped Cells for weeks on end, tied to bunks everything is done to Mental health prisoners, save for a legitimate and professional Mental Health Care.

The unlawful practices of retaliation against prisoners who dare complain and speak out against the criminal and malfeasant actions of ROSP officials and guards. Prisoners are accused of false infractions, mail is tampered with, outside exercise and showers denied. Meals denied. In some cases prisoners assaulted and battered by ROSP guards, AdSeg. confinement extended.

Last but not least ROSP, with tacit approval from VADOC executive leadership has effectively quashed the filing of Complaints and Grievances despite VADOC policies that speak to the filing of Complaints and Grievances. This quashing of Complaints and Grievance filings is what allows VADOC to be quoted by Solitary Watch that It has successfully decreased the grievances filed by men at ROSP by 71% and Solitary Watch just as it hasn't called for an outside independent investigation into the operation and practices at ROSP, didn't ask VADOC on how it managed to decrease complaints in any prison for that matter, let alone a Supermax one by the astounding revelation of 71%.

## SOLITARY WATCH IS ON THE RIGHT SIDE OF HISTORY

What the advocacy of Solitary Watch imperative needs to understand, then subsequently emphasize in its work is: The situation at ROSP as I have attempted to show isn't the colloquial cruel and inhumane treatment as Solitary Watch paraphrases certain ROSP prisoners as saying. But the issue is specific. Red Onion State Prison is a lawless prison. Each and every aspect of its operation is a text book study of malfeasance.

The attitude of ROSP official, inculcate into its rank and file, bubbling beneath the veneer of pseudo-professionalism is ROSP prisoners are convicts, the worst of the worst, so if a ROSP guard commits the criminal act of spitting in a prisoners food or committing the criminal act of assaulting and battering a prisoner in the ROSP guards mind it is not a criminal act because the victim is a prisoner. The Irony is casually lost on the guard that he/she are breaking and violating the same law that effected and permits the imprisonment of the prisoner to begin with. This fact isn't a simple issue of mistreatment, or harshness of conditions. But these are crimes that have to be recognized as such and its one thing for prison officials to excise hypocrisy as the only refuge-rationale of their lawlessness and malfeasance. But its entirely another for Solitary Watch and its side of history work, in an expose that pursues as its imperative governmental-accountability to give cover to and enable the lawlessness and malfeasance with distortive semantics

Solitary Watch and its allies should lend their voice and talent to the cause of demanding that Red Onion State Prison is investigated by the outside independent agency and in the interim the Virginia National Guard manages its daily operations

I see that the writer was given false information about a lot of things, such as D-6 closed management pod where everyone has a job and has time out of the cell working, they have programming available to them and that takes up a significant amount of 23 hypothetical hours in the cell. Anyone who is getting and believing information from these individuals has serious self esteem issues and does not

have the senses that it takes to work in this environment or report about this environment.

You're obviously part of the problem. I'd believe 90% of prisoners over a lying sadistic correctional officer anyday.

You've proven my point with your illogical rant.

I find the Snodgrass example to be absolutely laughable. Please read the link provided to see that the case was. Upon review of the record, the court summarily dismisses this action without prejudice as frivolous. This article completely mischaracterizes Snodgrass's case. This is why I don't pay much attention to activists' websites with their so-called evidence. If you want to read real journalism and research, you will have to look a lot harder than this.

I did read the link and the case appears to be exactly as stated, with the addition that inmates do not have a constitutionally protected right to a grievance procedure and therefore it is not the courts' business. Which only makes it worse in my view. The court does not disprove or dispute any of the things Snodgrass says, only claims that he has no \*legal\* standing to fix his mistreatment.

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