

Solitary Watch

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://solitarywatch.org/2019/12/24/help-us-show-people-in-solitary-that-they-are-not-forgotten/>

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Support Our Lifelines to Solitary Program Before the Year Ends, and Your Donation Will Be Doubled

by [Jean Casella and James Ridgeway](#) | December 24, 2019

Dear Readers, Supporters, and Friends:

For tens of thousands of people locked away in U.S. prisons and jails, the extreme deprivation and isolation of solitary confinement causes unimaginable suffering. One person living in solitary described his existence to us as a soul-destroying loneliness that never ends.

In this context, even the smallest human connection can make a difference and for many, that difference is profound.

Through our Lifelines to Solitary program, Solitary Watch reaches out to more than 5,000 people in solitary confinement with personal letters, newsletters, and holiday cards each year. For many, this is the only mail they receive. Over the years, people have written us back, telling us what it means to know that they have not been entirely forgotten.

This place is just very hard, living when you don't have any outside help. That's why having your support means so much to all the men locked up. Without you, we would have no one.

For over 500 men and women, Lifelines to Solitary also provides an actual pen pal a person with whom those confined to solitary cells can share their daily struggles, their ideas and interests, heartaches and hopes. Pen pals who participate in the program soon come to know how eagerly their letters are anticipated, and how deeply they are valued.

When my time here seems to be full of complex thoughts and my moments bring very little joy, I long for the unexpected. For the unplanned pleasures that come from just a pleasant written word. These are the things that brighten my days back here during those moments when my happiness seems to be depleted.

[Your support makes this program possible. Please donate today.](#)

These treasured moments of human connection that reach across prison walls are possible only because of your support. With no grant funding, the costs of running Lifelines to Solitary must be completely covered by individual donations. Only with your help can we continue to add new people to our mailing lists, match them up with correspondents on the outside, and bring messages from the outside world to thousands more men and women living in solitary confinement.

This year, your donation and your impact will be doubled, thanks to the NewsMatch program. All donations will be matched in full, up to \$1,000. If received by December 31. Please click on the link below to make your donation online, or learn where to send your check.

[All donations are doubled thanks to NewsMatch. Please give today!](#)

As you gather together with loved ones to welcome in the new year, please take a moment to remember those who live in complete isolation, and help us to show them that they are not forgotten.

I can't tell you how touched I am for you giving me any attention. I am so grateful to you and cried tears reading your card because the torture, abuse and neglect I'm facing makes this cell and my world a lonely place, and many days I think of how to take my own life and end the misery and pain but you inspire me and I continue to fight on.

With gratitude and warmest wishes,
Jean Casella and James Ridgeway, Co-Directors

P.S. Lifelines to Solitary is always seeking new pen pals, and we provide a unique level of support to ensure a safe and meaningful correspondence. If you or someone you know would like to learn more about the program, please visit our [Lifelines to Solitary page](#).

James Ridgeway (1936-2021) was the founder and co-director of Solitary Watch. An investigative journalist for over 60 years, he served

as Washington Correspondent for the Village Voice and Mother Jones, reporting domestically on subjects ranging from electoral politics to corporate malfeasance to the rise of the racist far-right, and abroad from Central America, Northern Ireland, Eastern Europe, Haiti, and the former Yugoslavia. Earlier, he wrote for The New Republic and Ramparts, and his work appeared in dozens of other publications. He was the co-director of two films and author of 20 books, including a forthcoming posthumous edition of his groundbreaking 1991 work on the far right, *Blood in the Face*. Jean Casella is the director of Solitary Watch. She has also published work in The Guardian, The Nation, and Mother Jones, and is co-editor of the book *Hell Is a Very Small Place: Voices from Solitary Confinement*. She has received a Soros Justice Media Fellowship and an Alicia Patterson Fellowship. She tweets @solitarywatch.

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 [Jean Casella](#)

December 29, 2021

by [Jean Casella](#)

December 23, 2021

by [Events and Announcements](#)

December 3, 2021

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