



Source: [twitter.com/evielitwok](https://twitter.com/evielitwok)

# Evie Litwok

**Solitary confinement traumatized me far more than being in prison did. And prison traumatized me. You have lost your freedom in a way you never have thought of. Your nerves are shot. You feel more edgy.** Source: "Women in Solitary Confinement" by Victoria Law, Truthout

**TIME IN SOLITARY:** 7 weeks

**AGE:** Incarcerated at age 60 and again at 63

**REASON FOR PLACEMENT IN SOLITARY:**

Punishment for writing about a correctional officer who ignored a medical crisis of another incarcerated woman.

Source: "I Went to Prison at Age 60. Here's What I Learned." Evie Litwok, The Nation

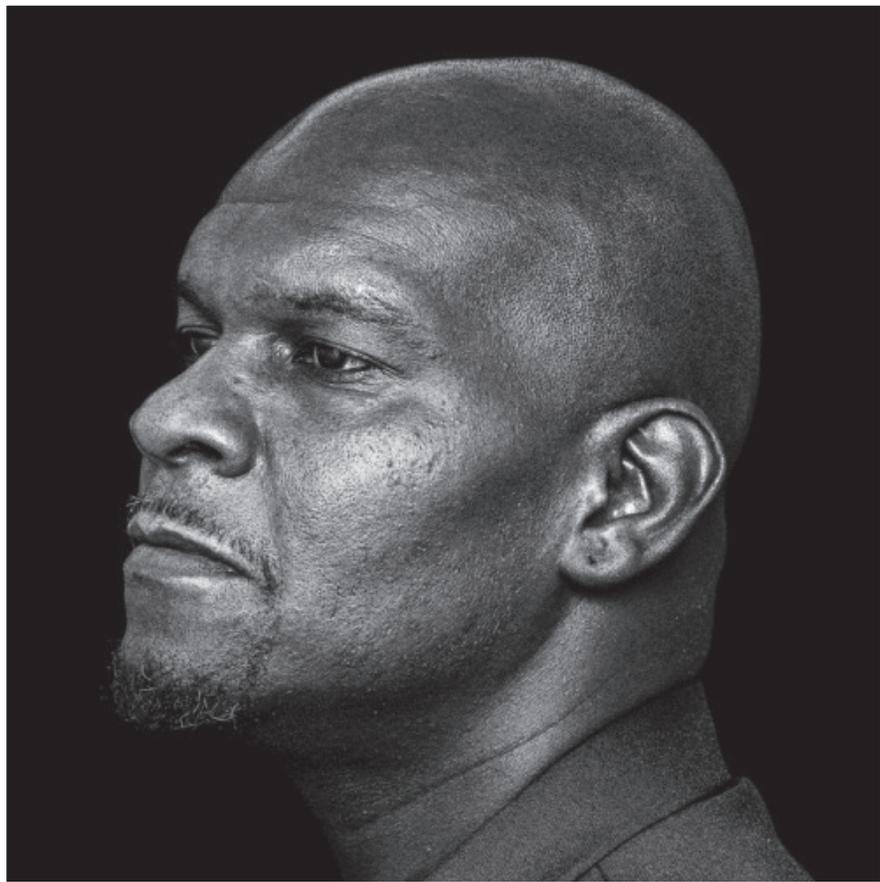
**AFTER SOLITARY:** Evie Litwok is the director of "Witness to Mass Incarceration," a project dedicated to memorializing America's 40-year history of mass incarceration.



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**Five Omar  
Mualimm-ak**

“**Solitary doesn't just confine your body;  
it kills your soul.**”

**TIME IN SOLITARY:** 5 years (2,054 days)

**REASON FOR PLACEMENT IN SOLITARY:**  
Punishment for having too many postage stamps  
and pencils, and failure to eat all the contents on  
his food tray (an apple).

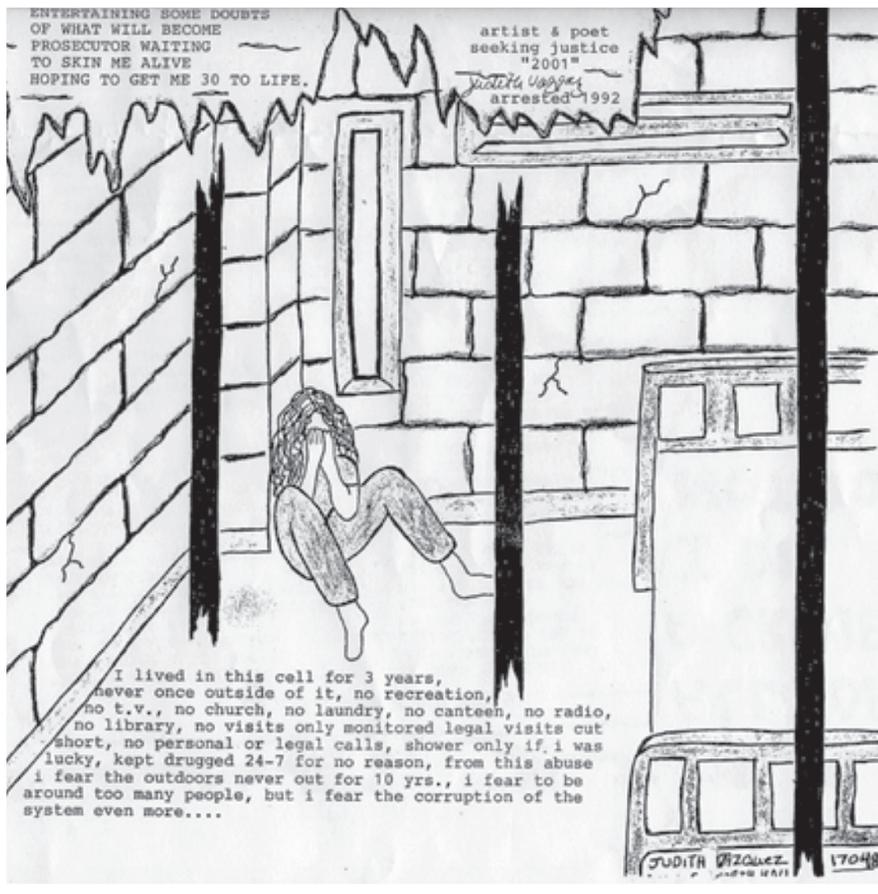
**AFTER SOLITARY:** Five Omar Mualimm-ak is  
Founder and Director of The Incarcerated Nation  
Corp. and a key leader in the New York Campaign  
for Alternatives to Isolated Confinement.



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Source: Survivors Manual, American Friends Service Committee

# Judith Vasquez

I never [saw] the sky, or felt the warmth of the sun, or a breeze pass me by, the trees and grass or a rain drop. I never knew how painful it could be to be denied nature itself.

**TIME IN SOLITARY:** 3 years

**AFTER SOLITARY:** In 2013, Judith was transferred to a minimum security section of the prison.



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**Kirk Gunderson**

**Kirk never asked for much while incarcerated; his primary ask was [that] he wanted a hug from his family.**

—Kirk's mother Vicky Gunderson

**TIME IN SOLITARY:** Approximately 12 hours

**AGE:** 17

Kirk Gunderson committed suicide on December 27, 2005 while in solitary confinement.

Source: Huffington Post



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Source: The New Yorker

# Kalief Browder

“Before I went to jail, I didn’t know about a lot of stuff, and, now that I’m aware, I’m paranoid... I feel like I was robbed of my happiness.”

**TIME IN SOLITARY:** 2 years

**AGE:** Arrested at age 16.

Accused of stealing a backpack, maintained his innocence, never convicted of a crime, jailed pre-trial 3 years.

**AFTER SOLITARY:** After being released without ever being convicted of a crime, Kalief suffered from mental health issues related to his incarceration and the physical and mental abuse he suffered while incarcerated. He committed suicide on June 6, 2015.



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# SOLITARY CONFINEMENT

On any given day in U.S. prisons, approximately

**80,000 to 100,000 PEOPLE**

**(disproportionately adults and youth of color) are held in conditions of solitary confinement for months, years, and even decades.**

This number does not include people in local jails, juvenile facilities, or in military and immigration detention.

This number does not tell you their names or their stories, but it is telling of a social moral crisis.

## What is Solitary Confinement?

Solitary confinement goes by many names. Though the exact conditions vary by state and institution the following are common characteristics of solitary confinement:

- **22–24 hours** a day in a cell alone or with another person
- **Removed** from meaningful contact with other human beings
- **No access** to rehabilitative or educational programming
- **Sensory Deprivation**



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## JUAN MÉNDEZ

*U.N. Special Rapporteur  
on Torture*

Juan Méndez stated in his 2011 report that *solitary confinement in excess of 15 days should “be subject to an absolute prohibition”* based on scientific evidence of its psychological damage. He called for a ban on its use for those most vulnerable to its impacts, including persons with mental illness, pregnant women, and youth.

In 2015, the UN General Assembly adopted a revised version of the UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners to reflect these standards, known as the ‘Nelson Mandela Rules.’

## PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA

*The Washington Post,  
January 25, 2016*

“How can we subject prisoners to unnecessary solitary confinement, knowing its effects, and then expect them to return to our communities as whole people? It doesn’t make us safer. It’s an affront to our common humanity.”