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.

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.

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.
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.
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.

---

*Judith Vasquez*

Source: Survivors Manual, American Friends Service Committee
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
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.

Kalief Browder

Source: The New Yorker
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

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

“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.”