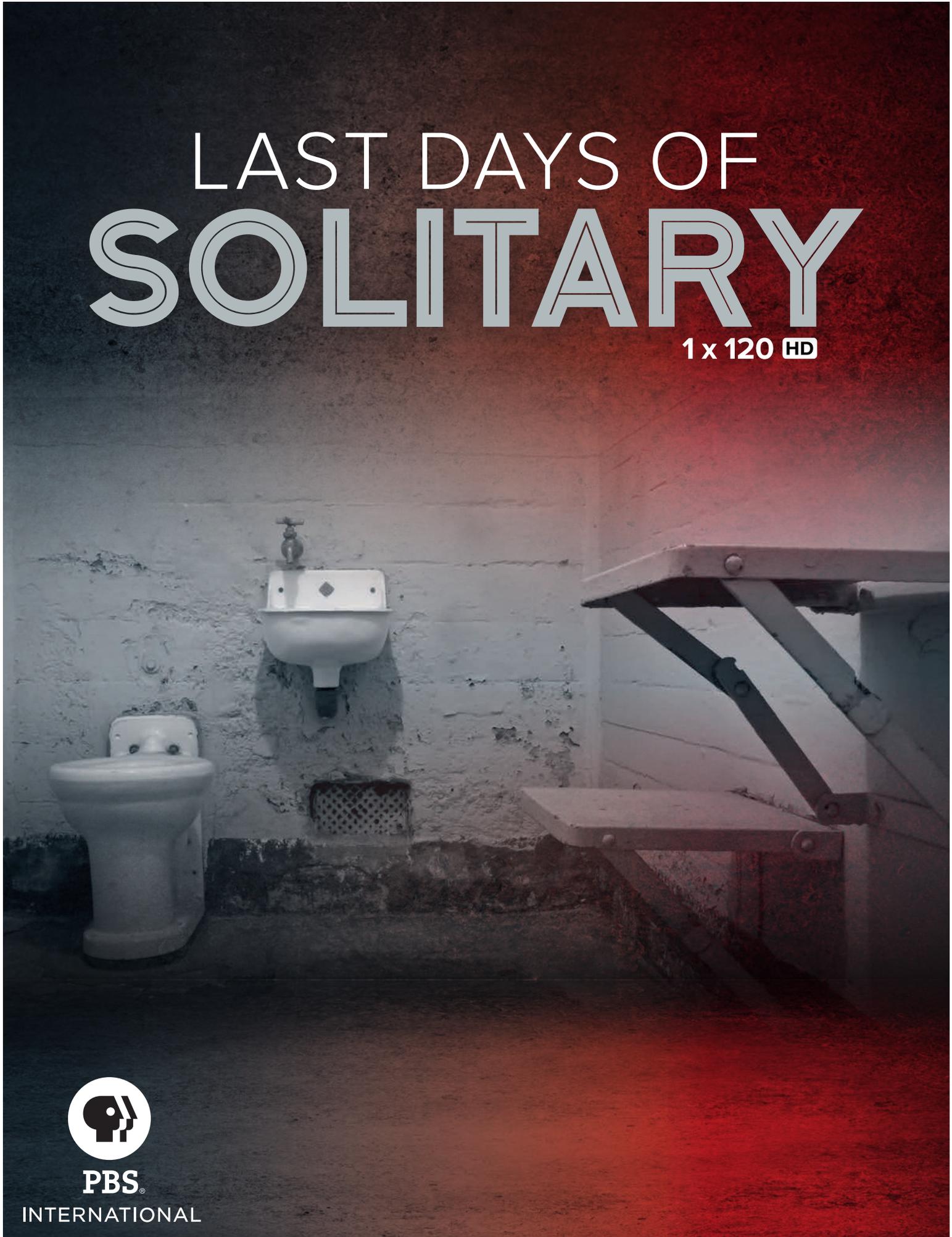


LAST DAYS OF SOLITARY

1 x 120 HD



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CONTACT

Tom Koch, Vice President
PBS International
10 Guest Street
Boston, MA 02135 USA

TEL: 617-300-3893
FAX: 617-779-7900

jt Koch@pbs.org
pbsinternational.org

The U.S. is the world leader in solitary confinement. More than 80,000 American prisoners are living in isolation; some have been there for years, even decades. Critics say it amounts to torture, proponents say it is necessary to keep prison officers and other inmates safe.

In 2011, Maine State Prison launched a pioneering reform program to scale back its use of solitary confinement. When a new warden was appointed to accelerate the reforms in 2013, filmmakers Dan Edge and Lauren Mucciolo were given unprecedented access to the solitary unit—and filmed there off and on for more than three years. The result is an extraordinary and harrowing portrait of life in solitary—and a unique document of a radical and risky experiment to reform a prison.

The five inmates all pose different challenges to the new warden as he tries to scale back the use of solitary. Todd Fickett, a serial self-harmer, is moved to a mental health unit. Sam Caison, who has a long history of life in solitary, is given programming in ordinary prison population. Adam Brulotte, a young inmate on a short sentence, takes a course in anger management but is unable to control himself and ends up stuck in solitary for repeated bad behavior and he unravels quickly. Gordon Perry is in solitary for stabbing another inmate but then behaves well—so is given a chance back in ordinary prison population. Richard Stahursky, one of the prison's most notorious inmates, also behaves well in solitary—so he too is given a chance out in general population with the other inmates. With unprecedented access and intimate interviews, the film follows their stories across three years in prison. The film also delves into the two hundred year history of solitary confinement in the United States, and the latest research on the psychological effects of long-term isolation.

Last Days of Solitary shines an unblinking light on a world that until now has been hidden from public view. In unprecedented scenes, it portrays—almost in real-time—the psychological disintegration of human beings. And it asks fundamental questions: what is the psychological impact of solitary? What effects do offenders carry with them back into the community? And does solitary ultimately make us more or less safe?

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CREDITS

Directors: Dan Edge and Lauren Mucciolo

Executive Producer of FRONTLINE: Raney Aronson-Rath

Image: Matt Ragen/Shutterstock.com; Peshkova/Shutterstock.com (texture)



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