

Who Killed Kalief? Examining the Effects of Solitary Confinement on Juvenile Detainees in the United States

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Abstract : It is well settled that the use of solitary confinement can cause psychological and physical harm to detainees. For juveniles, who are more susceptible to irreparable harm due to their underdeveloped psyches, the risks are exacerbated. Despite these risks, across the United States juvenile detainees are regularly held in isolation for prolonged periods of time. This essay will examine the broad impact of solitary confinement on juvenile detainees while giving particular focus to the story of Kalief Browder, a juvenile awaiting trial on Rikers Island in New York for a period of three years, nearly two years of which were spent in solitary confinement. Although sadly, his story is not uncommon, Kalief's story offers a unique perspective in that it provides first-hand insight on the effects of solitary confinement on juveniles. It is our hope that by sharing his story, we will demand better detention practices and policies for juveniles under correctional control in the United States.

Keywords : criminal justice system, juveniles, Kalief browder, solitary confinement

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