



# Way Down in the Hole

Race, Intimacy, and the Reproduction of Racial Ideologies in Solitary Confinement

by Angela J. Hattery and Earl Smith  
Foreword by Terry A. Kupers

## DESCRIPTION

Based on ethnographic observations and interviews with prisoners, correctional officers, and civilian staff conducted in solitary confinement units, *Way Down in the Hole* explores the myriad ways in which daily, intimate interactions between those locked up twenty-four hours a day and the correctional officers charged with their care, custody, and control produce and reproduce hegemonic racial ideologies. Smith and Hattery explore the outcome of building prisons in rural, economically depressed communities, staffing them with white people who live in and around these communities, filling them with Black and brown bodies from urban areas and then designing the structure of solitary confinement units such that the most private, intimate daily bodily functions take place in very public ways. Under these conditions, it shouldn't be surprising, but is rarely considered, that such daily interactions produce and reproduce white racial resentment among many correctional officers and fuel the racialized tensions that prisoners often describe as the worst forms of dehumanization. *Way Down in the Hole* concludes with recommendations for reducing the use of solitary confinement, reforming its use in a limited context, and most importantly, creating an environment in which prisoners and staff co-exist in ways that recognize their individual humanity and reduce rather than reproduce racial antagonisms and racial resentment.

[Way Down the Hole Video 1 \(https://youtu.be/UuAB63fhge0\)](https://youtu.be/UuAB63fhge0)

[Way Down the Hole Video 2 \(https://youtu.be/TwEuw1cTrcQ\)](https://youtu.be/TwEuw1cTrcQ)

[Way Down the Hole Video 3 \(https://youtu.be/bOcbV\\_UnHls\)](https://youtu.be/bOcbV_UnHls)

[Way Down the Hole Video 4 \(https://youtu.be/cx\\_l1S8D77c\)](https://youtu.be/cx_l1S8D77c)

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