



JG: This history challenges the idea that we don't have "political prisoners" in the US, and yet there are people that are treated differently because of what they think, who they are—not any infraction, but what they believe.

OL: As long as you don't become political, you don't pose a threat. I went to prison as a revolutionary, and at the time, in 1975, we had a high-profile case. I'm a New Afrikan anarchist. So, they thought my presence in the population was a threat, and they moved to isolate me.

JG: Ironically, it is a recognition of your power. In a collage on view at MoMA PS1 you include a letter from the prison denying your release from the MCU in 2008, just a year before your eventual release from prison, specifically because you might influence other prisoners. I found it interesting that they so blatantly admit the fact that they're holding you because of your beliefs, but also that you might be so persuasive as to sway the rest of the population.

BK: And it took us 22 years for them to say that. That, for me, was an ah-ha moment. My outrage, my grief, had to do with being very attached to my generation. It was a generation that was killed in Vietnam, murdered on the campuses of Jackson and Kent State. I saw young people being murdered by law enforcement in the South. To see people and groups I admired—the Panthers, the Puerto Rican Independence Movement, American Indian Movement, women radicals—thrown away in the solitary confinement units, I was profoundly moved to work on this and expose it. There are many extraordinary groups working on the issue right now, and I think you're looking at ground zero. Prison Watch started working on the issue of solitary confinement in 1986, and it has international implications because isolation in prison violates the United Nations Covenants on Torture that the US has ratified and signed.

JG: Ojore, can describe what it felt like to be held in the MCU? What was a day like for you there? And what were your survival tactics? How did you make it through 22 years?

OL: As a revolutionary I came to terms with the prospects of death and captivity. So, I was prepared for it psychologically. I would get up in the morning, wash up, read, write, listen to the news, and exercise. Maybe I'd be able to make a telephone call. I'd be on lockdown 22 hours one day and 24 hours the next. Then once I met Bonnie, she was my bridge over troubled waters. And she gave us a voice, she gave us a human face. She was listened to because she was a middle-class white woman. And the state didn't like that, telling her that these people were "the worst of the worst." Bonnie would challenge them, noting that they haven't violated any of the

