

BOLD Ideas, ESSENTIAL Reading

Way Down in the Hole

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

ANGELA J. HATTERY AND EARL SMITH

FOREWORD BY TERRY A. KUPERS

Based on ethnographic observations and interviews with inmates, 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 inmates 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 inmates and staff co-exist in ways that recognize their individual humanity and reduce rather than reproduce racial antagonisms and racial resentment.

ANGELA J. HATTERY is a professor of women and gender studies and co-director of the Center for the Study and Prevention Based Violence at the University of Delaware in Newark. She is the author of eleven books, including *Policing Black Bodies: How Black Lives are Surveilled and How to Work for Change* and *The Social Dynamics of Family Violence* (both with Earl Smith).

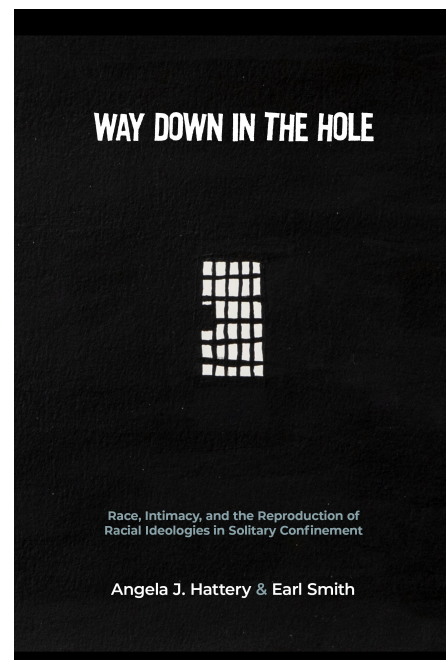
EARL SMITH is a professor of women and gender studies at the University of Delaware in Newark. He also holds the position of Emeritus Rubin Distinguished Professor of American Ethnic Studies and Sociology at Wake Forest University. He is the author of thirteen books, including *Policing Black Bodies: How Black Lives are Surveilled and How to Work for Change* and *The Social Dynamics of Family Violence* (both with Angela J. Hattery).

TERRY A. KUPERS is a psychiatrist and professor emeritus at the Wright Institute in Berkeley, California. He is the author of *Solitary: The Inside Story of Supermax Isolation and How We Can Abolish It* and *Prison Madness: The Mental Health Crisis Behind Bars and What We Must Do About It*.

Critical Issues in Crime and Society

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