Federal Prosecutors can hold defendants before trial in solitary confinement under a legal device called Special Administrative Measures (SAMs). Pre-trial solitary confinement can last for years and impair the defendants’ mental ability to cooperate in their own defense or testify coherently.

Defendants may also be sentenced to isolation units called Communication Management Units (CMUs), in retaliation for expressing their constitutionally protected religious beliefs, unpopular political views, or for challenging rights violations in the federal prison system.

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