

# Restore Justice Foundation

## Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://restorejustice.org/fallen/>

### Public Facing Advocacy Writing

She was probably in her 80s; clear, dark skin, perfectly coiffed hair. Peach colored dress. Quick with a smile. A younger woman, a daughter, maybe, was helping her along.

Everyone in line with the lady-in-peach, including me, was shifting nervously, making small-talk, anxious to get through the security process to reunite. Each of us came to visit someone in this maximum security prison. Sons, brothers, grandpas, friends, cousins, boyfriends, husbands.

The lady-in-peach, her maybe-a-daughter, and their loved one lit up when they saw one another in the visiting room. (I love looking around when I first enter, love to see people hug and smile and hold each others faces and hands. Children scooped up and squeezed. Its a happy moment, happier than youd imagine.)

Time passed.

When I needed to end my visit, I spoke with the desk Sergeant to see if a guard could come and get me. The Sergeant kindly told me she had been asking for a guard to come for some time, and she looked anxious. Twenty-five minutes earlier, she had called for someone to come and take the lady-in-peach to the restroom. It seemed her call had been ignored.

The visiting room at this facility has no restroom. A prison that holds more than 3,000 men, and there is only one toilet for all visitors, located in a remote visitor center. To use it, you must be escorted through three locked doors, a stretch outside, and one more locked door. Buzzers. Pauses. Lines.

Another ten minutes pass before a guard finally comes to take us out. I turned to smile at the lady-in-peach, and she looked into my eyes, hers red rimmed, and started to run toward the door, an acrid smell in her wake.

She had become incontinent while waiting.

I followed her out, feeling every second it takes to get back to the one toilet available to visitors.

In the visitor center, across from the restroom, there is a large group of guards, lounging, laughing, and talking amongst themselves. Normal. They are either unaware or indifferent to the humiliation of the lady-in-peach.

A week later, Im still thinking of the lady-in-peach and her loved ones in that visiting room. Im still thinking about the indignities heaped upon anyone who comes in contact with our prison system. Im wondering if anything any of us do to try to fix this system of punishment, to transform it, could ever be enough to raise us up from how far down weve fallen.

Mostly, I like to think I am a reasonable, professional advocate, working for positive policy reforms in the criminal justice system. I believe incremental changes make a difference. I work in a positive, constructive manner, writing issue briefs, educating policy-makers, hosting events.

But today, thinking about the lady-in-peach, Im just another one of the fallen. Tripped, stumbling, somehow keeping my eyes open while it all keeps lumbering on. And Im screaming.

Prison is a sad reality that it is destroying those it hold in bondage as well as their families and friends. All of these conditions create systemic trauma that take lifetimes to heal well after men are released from these conditions. We are in an era where that social and psychological services are denied. I have asked the question since my release why do the U.S. government permit these harsh conditions knowing its a form of torture that affect lives for decades even once they are released? The activists community must start to focus on prisons systematically and fight for change. I cried reading this blog because it opens trauma that I have collected with the consent of government and not many people care until they are placed in the webb of these inhumane conditions. Where is true justice for those that have a voice but are held silent by their bondage of incarceration. All I say is wow! God hear the ry of your people.

Mark, I am so sorry for your tears in reading this. I agree that we need to turn the tide on these inhumane conditions. We have to focus on prisons, even when we are told there is nothing we can do, we have to keep trying. Love to you.

How terrible that scenario played out for me after reading, I have my son elderly grandmother 87 years young thinking of this happening also to her, but thank God Stateville has better facilities.

More proof, if any were needed that the white race, because thats definitely the dynamic of the culturally and spiritually bankrupt white race, is more savage today than it was 2,000 years ago.

Many Thanks. A good article.

Restore Justice Foundation  
PO Box 101099  
Chicago, IL 60610

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