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Robert Johan Richter

## NOT A WITNESS

Two guys fight. When the officer comes to pack up their property, he uses a shovel to break open one guy's padlock. Why? Pure evil. We have to buy special locks that have a key slot, and the combinations are all on file, but the cops enjoy ruining our locks and making us pay for new ones. I've seen a hundred locks broken in my dorm alone over the last year.

In the Mess Hall, guys crowd to the windows to watch two cops drag a handcuffed inmate to the box, pants and underwear around his ankles, private parts flapping in the breeze, while a female sergeant enjoys the spectacle. I myself didn't go to the window, since I don't want to see that kind of crime, or a naked man, but the guys who were watching described it well enough. Nobody bothered to report it. Nobody would investigate, and retaliation is certain. The sergeant's message was clear: This could be you next.

If there was any chance at all of justice, that sergeant wouldn't have publicly broken the law like that, but she knew, beyond any doubt, that there would be no witnesses. No other cop ever reports such crimes, and inmates can't witness anything. DOCCS was finally forced, after decades of assaults, rapes, and murders, to install a camera system in Attica, but there are no cameras here. No prison

Permission slip on file

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is stalked by law-abiding cops, if one was, it would be a major miracle.

Years ago, in Green Haven, pigeons were nesting in the attic spaces above the cellblocks. The maintenance crew installed screens, trapping the birds inside to die. We, the equally helpless prisoners, watched for three days as they slowly died of thirst, frantically and futilely trying to escape. That could be us, locked in our cells with the water turned off. The psychopathic criminals the State hires to guard its prisons would do it in a heartbeat.

I tried to file a grievance, but was told that I couldn't, because I could only grieve things that affect me personally. Watching animals being tortured to death tortures me, but not the sickos who run New York's prisons. They can watch the most horrifying atrocities without blinking an eye, and can't even begin to imagine how powerfully it affects people who have sympathy, empathy, and compassion.

Or maybe they can. Prison employees openly enjoy the most sadistic acts, like the crimes I wrote about in "Death Comix" (on [www.PrisonFoundation.org](http://www.PrisonFoundation.org), free to read). They can't not know the effect their constant open criminality has on the prisoners who see it, but can't bear witness to it. There's nobody to report these crimes to. If the Superintendent here would do her legal duty, her subordinates wouldn't be openly breaking the law. There is no justice here.