

# American Prison Writing Archive

## Writings By Datra Johnson Vol. III

### (Bus Ride/or Chain Gang)

The Texas Department of Criminal Justice, is in need of a ~~desperately~~ ~~desperately~~ desperate desperate up grade the whole system including, the transportation system. There are three ways, well actually four ways criminals get cuffed, and chained up. Im going to describe these ways that Im aware of and have been through, then Ill zoom in on exactly the procedure that T.D.C.J. Uses there system desperately needs a upgrade. Everything that T.D.C.J. does is ancient.

When you are being transported as a inmate, prisoner, or whatever you want to call it. The way you can determine a prisoners class is by how he is chained up.

- ① If a prisoner has no restraints, he is trusty by a large amount of the system, which indicates more than likely, he will not run, or act out violently. (More than likely he wont)
- ② Some inmates are cuffed in the front with a single pair of double lock hand cuffs. When a prisoner is cuffed in the front, the officer who cuffed him has made the choice that he trust this individual not to do anything out of the ordinary. When the single cuffs are in the back with your hands behind your back, its a basic standard procedure to help the transporting officer direct you ~~and~~ if need be, and you do not have the ability to access your hands to defend yourself in any way. Also when two inmates are being transported together, in Texas Prisons, if you are low risk they just single cuff you to your partner, or the other inmate being transferred. Some institution privately owned use this method but they add a leg restraint combining you and the next inmate who is pairing with you.
- ③ Now in TDCJ, for the more severe violent offenders in higher security level the chain your wrist wit one hand facing up, and the other down directly above it. Also with a lock box on the cuffs, so there is no movement.
- ④ For more drastic measures they cuff you as mentioned and described in no. 3, but they go around your waist and put leg restraints on you with the cuffs attached to the leg restraints, leaving you in a hunched over position. This is a very inhumane

technique, it resembles the old ancient times when inmates had that weighted ball around their ankles. This is how bad it looks.

The Feds chain you up with this method but they give you plenty of room with the length of the chains, and they cuff your hands normally, no special awkward positioning of the wrist.

Now my calculations may not be exact but I believe Texas has over 200 ~~prisons~~ correctional facilities, this is with the combination of Jails, Prisons, Bootcamps, and other juvenile detention centers.

However, when you leave county and go to Prison in Texas, even though a Prison is nine times out of ten within one-hundred miles or less than your county jail, they will load you up on a bus and send you clear across the second biggest state in America, once you complete the intake process, they send you across the state again, to what they call transfer facility, you can stay up to two years, then they will move you again. Your never guaranteed to stay at one location, An lots of times most inmates are taken away from the family, and not even in reasonable proximitys to be placed in a position to recieve visits from family members. Now their is a deal, Hartship Transfer, your family has to get a doctor to provide documents saying a immediate family member cant travel that far. Then if TDCJ accepts it, they will move you closer to home. The option is still theirs though.

The transfer Bus are old worn down school buses, with hard plastic seats. The seats are small than the ones on the kids school buses, and you have to share this seat with any sized individual who you randomly get paired with, which might be good or bad.

Theirs no handicap section for people on crutches or with medical conditions. So you have no comfort with your health disposition.

Futher more every bus is always filled, due to prison over crowding, so imagine about sixty grown men, very big in a school bus ~~with~~ sharing seats half the size of those on a child school Bus, and you are also. . . . each person is carrying a chain bag which is up to 90 pounds depending on how much property they are transferring with.

Even though they have cargo space in the bottom they make you carry the bags with you.

Alot of inmates spend weeks, and days traveling across the state, and the ride is horrible. You cant even move sometimes, not while your sitting down. Your legs are in a locked position, and if you move it comes with a excuse me; you

are pretty much guaranteed you will touch someone with your food or hand.

The windows are covered with metal, so you cannot see, even though the metal has holes in it, the suffocation from so many people is still there, but you can breathe.

Feeding wise, you will receive a brown bag with two sandwiches, and prunes. But the ~~food~~ sandwiches, vary on what unit you came from so does it vary whether you get raisins or prunes. Still you will never receive a sandwich that is worth bragging about. Sometimes you don't even receive a brown bag lunch. Sad to say,

If you look on a prison bus being ~~transferred~~ from the outside of a prisoners life looking in. You will see the resemblance of a Slave Ship. Especially T.D.C., ~~and~~ and its the way you are packed together like stock with hardly any room big enough for you and a pair to occupy. Its a sad sight to view.

Several prisoners turn down opportunities, and medical treatments, because they do not want to deal with this Horrible Transferring Process. Im one of the several prisoners who have turned down a transfer just cause of this reason.

Ive been transported in Federal Custody, and by local Sheriffs, but being transferred by T.D.C., makes the two Farmers seem like a First class flight. Cause, ~~there~~ Texas Department of Criminal Justice, is that bad. In many areas they do not care about the safety and health of inmates. But one day someone will see the unorganized, inhumane condition which us prisoners dwell in and they will fix this very situation which I describe

- Datra Johnson -  
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