

8/9/19

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## Trays Up

At 6:00 AM sharp, the LEDs fill the room with light. I'm awake and I'm hungry like every morning. Breakfast trays should be here within 20-30 minutes. It's the same everyday, no matter what day it is.

If I'm awake before 6:20 (I usually am) I will sit at my desk and look out my skinny window to wait to see the tray cart being pushed onto the block. I sit, and wait, sometimes I go to the door to look out the narrow window to see what time it is.

I get a special diet that comes in a bag. There are times when my diet doesn't show up on the cart. When this happens I have to wait an extra 30-45 minutes, hungry, for my food to arrive. It's always a gamble.

The sound of plastic trays being stacked on their small cart can be heard and it lets me know it about time to eat. The trepidation is overwhelming as we all wait for food. Then the C.O. yells down the range, "Trays Up!" and they start passing them out.

As I press my face against the cell window I can see the edge of the cart. It is close now, maybe 2-3 cells away.

I'm hoping that it won't be a C.O. that's disinclined to feed me. Believe it or not, somehow this happens quite often. It's terrifying to think about your cell getting passed all because the C.O. doesn't like something about you.

Finally the cart stops in front of my cell. The C.O. glances at me goes for my bag, slides it in, and slams the tray slot shut.

Impassive and disconnected, he moves on...