

The Shipment

"Now I'm free!... Free falling!" We all sang along to Tom Petty's hit song. We were free for a moment in time. A moment of our own. We were free from Fluvanna Correctional Center for Women. The only problem was, we were being transferred to a new prison. But for that moment, we were free.

The bus ride was the best part of our journey I feel. Prior to our bus ride, we all sat in a room at FCCW awaiting hearing our name called to be dressed out into the bright orange transportation attire. Some of us had chain loops on our shirts. Some on our pants. But the loops were definitely there, no doubt about that. We would be chained, hand-cuffed

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and shackled for the ordeal. Uncomfortably, but most definitely. By the time I was uncuffed, the lines on my wrist were so deep and red that my fingers were numb. Painful.

When we arrived at our new location, Goodland, we had to stay seated on our bus which resembled a horse trailer with its oblong, horizontal windows. They were inserted way up high on the bus, so we had to stand to be able to peer out at the scenery on the 45 minute drive. Standing was not permitted, of course. Naturally we had one rebel. She was the hypochondriac in our bunch and claimed motion sickness, so she stood to watch the road pass. She got sick not even once on the trip. So much for that. There

is always one.

After sitting on the bus hand-cuffed, chained and shackled for one an hour, we were tired and ready to get the next step done and over with. The whole intake process. Lengthy and tiresome.

We had to sit around tables in yet another room and listen to new rules and regulations. Then swab our own noses and dip the test strip into the solution to assure we were COVID-19 free. We did our paperwork and were then strip-searched once again and dressed into our prison chamberly shirt and blue jeans. Next came the searching of the property we brought with us from Fluvanna. More sitting after that, but thankfully they fed us in the process because we

were started after it all.

Finally we made it to this basement where we'll be for the next 2-3 weeks. It is an open dorm, so there are 36 other women down here with me. We are sharing very close quarters with people we do not know but we have to make it work. We also share our belongings and commissary with one another just to make it. Some of us have things that others do not, so as they say, team-work makes the dream work! And we have thus far.

If one of us has coffee and the other, creamer, we each share what we have to make the perfect cup of coffee. If one styles hair, and the other plucks eyebrows, they do each other's so it all works out well. When

placed in such a situation, one must learn to survive by any necessary means. You learn to live. You adapt to your surroundings.

You share the showers, sinks and toilets, as well as the phones and the kiosk. There is no room for being shy about your body. Someone will inevitably see a part of you accidentally. The toilet or shower curtain may just blow from the wind of the fan and expose you when you're most vulnerable. Oh well. This is prison. The world in which is currently over, unfortunately.

Thankfully this is a temporary situation for many of us. But it was scary nonetheless. Especially for me as I had been at FCDW for the past 16 years. Once again,

this is prison life and in such,
one must always expect the
unexpected. And so, here I
am, transferred.

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