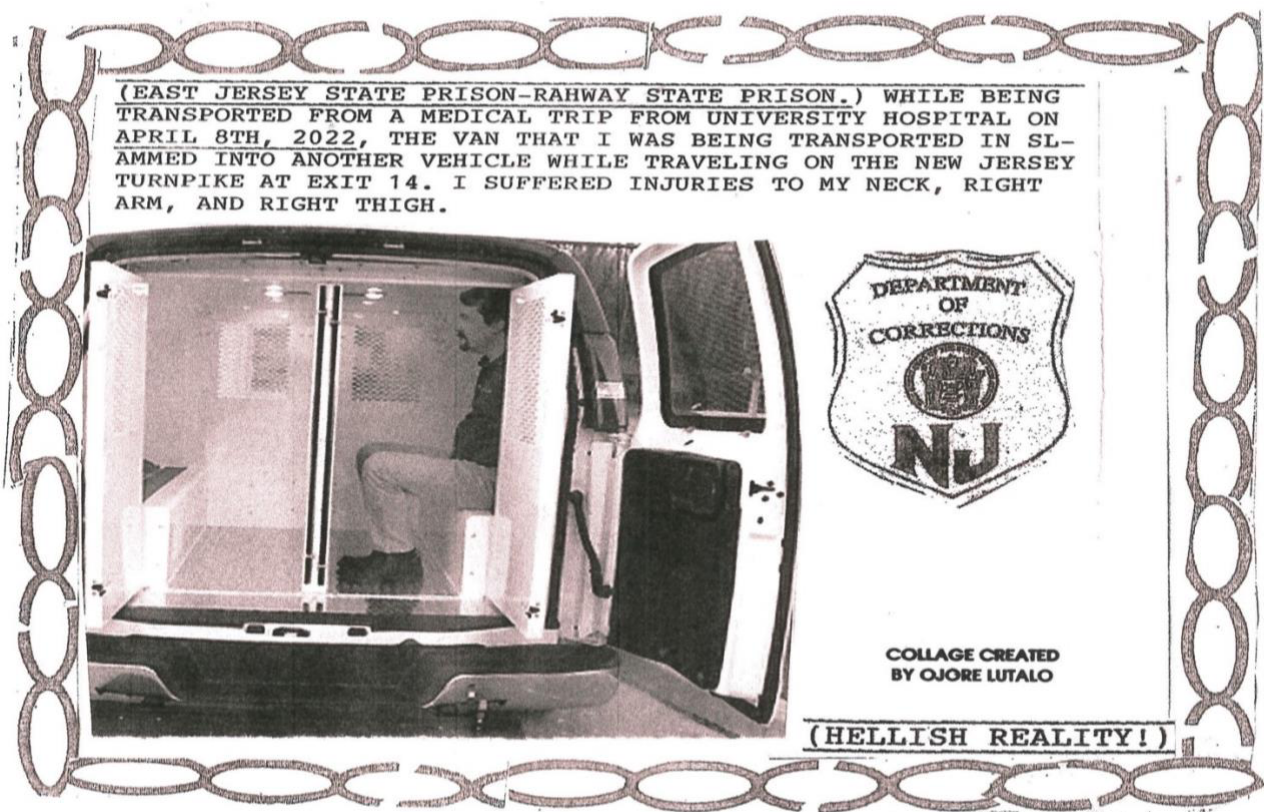


From the inside-out

Highlighting voices from those affected by
Prisoner transportation



collage art by Ojore Lutalo

**ISSUE #13 — DECEMBER 2022 —
A REPORT BY THE AFSC PRISON WATCH**



**American
Friends
Service
Committee**

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This edition of “From the Inside Out” is dedicated to Lydia Thornton who passed in October 2022. Lydia was a contributing editor with lived experience. Her lived experience helped AFSC produce a newsletter that had authenticity and spoke truth to power. We remain grateful to Lydia who gave so much of herself for the benefit of us all.

This is a community effort created by the voices inside.

Prison Watch Program Director

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Artwork

Ojore Lutalo

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Introduction

Prisoner transportation may seem like a mundane aspect of incarceration, but it is an issue that affects every prisoner at some point. Transports are often the only physical connection prisoners have to the outside world, but people in prison report that they dread transfers and trips due to the hazardous conditions.

There is a lack of research and attention on prisoner transportation in prisoner's rights movements and advocacy. Most research and articles on prisoner transportation focus solely on private prisoner transportation, but there are also serious concerns about transportation provided by state Department of Corrections and Federal Transit. The American Friends Service Committee's Prison Watch Program often receives complaints and testimonies related to prisoner transportation, especially medical transports. There are safety issues with the transportation vehicles themselves as well as added issues of reckless driving, blatant disregard for health conditions, and an overall indifference to the well-being of prisoners.

Prisoner transport issues have been brought to the forefront through highly publicized cases such as the death of Freddie Gray and Randy Cox's paralysis in June 2022. This edition of "From the Inside Out" was specifically inspired by a recent transportation tragedy involving Randy Cox in New Haven, Connecticut as well as the frequent complaints we receive citing similar issues. The incidents involving Freddie Gray and Randy Cox occurred soon after arrest, but they are not different from the everyday transport issues that incarcerated people experience. The cases that are publicized often stem from lawsuits related to prisoner transport van accidents, but this litigation is just a small fraction of incidents. The inability of every prisoner to seek legal justice for these frequent incidents is another reason it is crucial to highlight the voices of those directly impacted by the unsafe

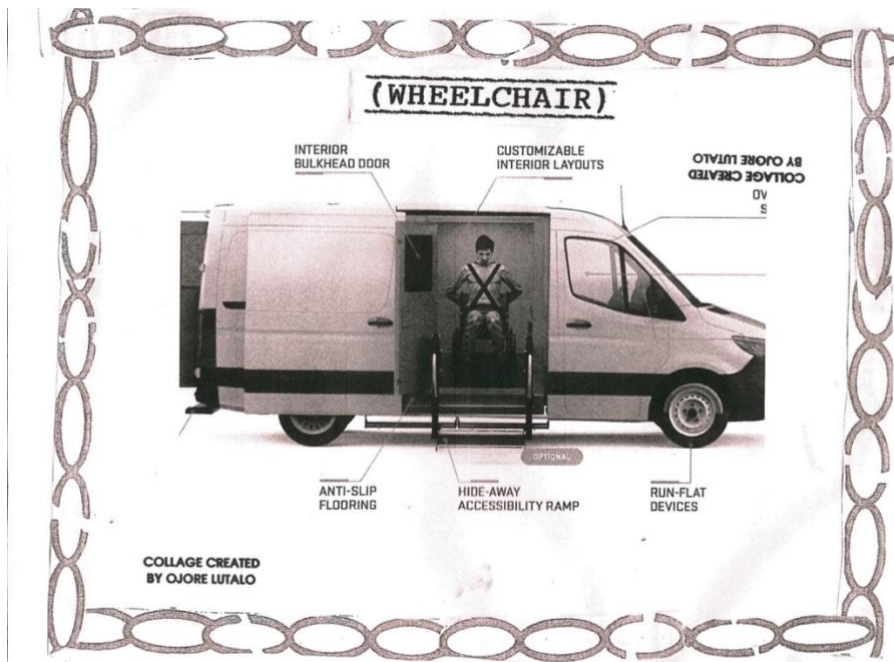
conditions of prisoner transports. AFSC recommends improving transportation conditions and implementing regulations that would benefit all parties involved, including the D.O.C. custody staff, as the vans are dangerous for every passenger in the vehicle.

AFSC Prison Watch Program Director Bonnie Kerness emphasizes that the program receives regular complaints regarding transportation in New Jersey and from prisons across the country. She explains that the issues with the transport vans are not just speeding, crashes, and a lack of seatbelts, but serious medical concerns arise. In New Jersey, Bonnie states that many of the complaints come from prisoners at South Woods prison and New Jersey State Prison. Most notably, Bonnie recalls the treatment of the late prisoner S.M. during frequent medical trips. S.M. had diabetes and required dialysis treatment outside of the prison multiple times a week. While S.M. had the typical complaints of speeding and a lack of safety, his strongest protest was the tightness of the handcuffs and chains throughout the medical trips. A common side effect of dialysis treatment is swelling, including swelling of the hands. S.M.'s hands were very swollen after dialysis and the tight handcuffs caused pain as the swelling only worsened. S.M.'s doctor wrote letters to the South Woods staff stating that only loose soft cuffs were to be used on S.M. due to his medical conditions. In the following months and years, this medical advice was not followed by South Woods custody staff no matter how loudly S.M. and others protested. The South Woods staff ignoring clear medical instructions reveals an apparent tension between medical staff and custody/transportation staff in these situations. While the custody staff cited "safety reasons" as to why they would not comply with doctor's orders, S.M. did not pose safety risks due to his declining health and various medical conditions. Bonnie Kerness connects this case of medical abuse to the need for sensitivity to medical conditions in the transportation of prisoners.

"Paddy wagons' insides are like the insides of refrigerators— featureless containers designed for the impersonal storage of meat."

— Daniel Genis "The Pains I've Endured Inside Police Vans and Prison Buses" *Vice.com*

Transportation Issues



Medical Transports

The transportation of prisoners with health conditions in unsafe vans may constitute cruel and unusual punishment as well as medical torture. Prisoners with medical conditions are often placed into inaccessible vans and improper restraints. The problems surrounding prisoner medical transports are not just prisoner rights issues, but disability rights issues as well. We have received reports of prisoners desperately needing to go to the hospital and prison staff replying that they do not have any staff or vans to transport them at that time. When this happens, the prison staff are overstepping their role by making medical decisions and denying medical care to prisoners. On the other hand, it is common for prisoners to deny or turn down offsite medical care because of the infamous transportation van conditions. Many do not think that the van rides are worth the risks because they may cause or worsen medical issues. Prisoners should not be pressured into refusing necessary health care because the transportation to the hospital or medical facility can cause worse damage than their medical issue itself.

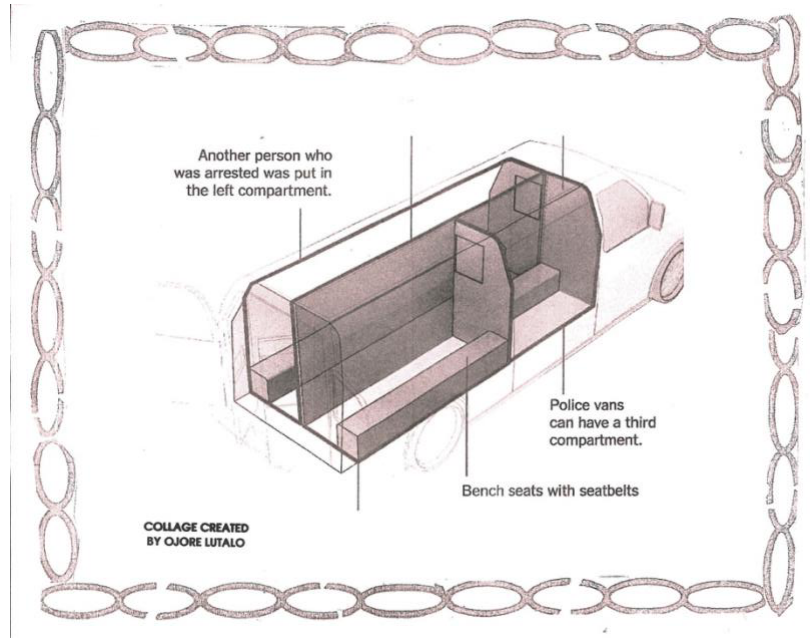
Seatbelts

Many prisoner transport vans do not have seatbelts or restraints. Even with seatbelt laws, there is still no guarantee that the officer will put the policy into practice, as we saw in the transport of Freddie Gray in 2015. Instead of regular seatbelts, some departments, including the Philadelphia Police Department, opt for less secure options such as “grab belts.” Prisoner transport vans are typically metal and unpadded. This is extremely uncomfortable and unsafe for prisoners.

Transport Vans

Prisoner transport vans are extremely dangerous. There are many types of transport vans used across the country as each state’s Department of Corrections has different policies. Within the New Jersey Department of Corrections, there are three main types of prisoner transport vans. There are handicap-accessible/wheelchair vans, traditional caged cushioned bench vans, and “dog kennel

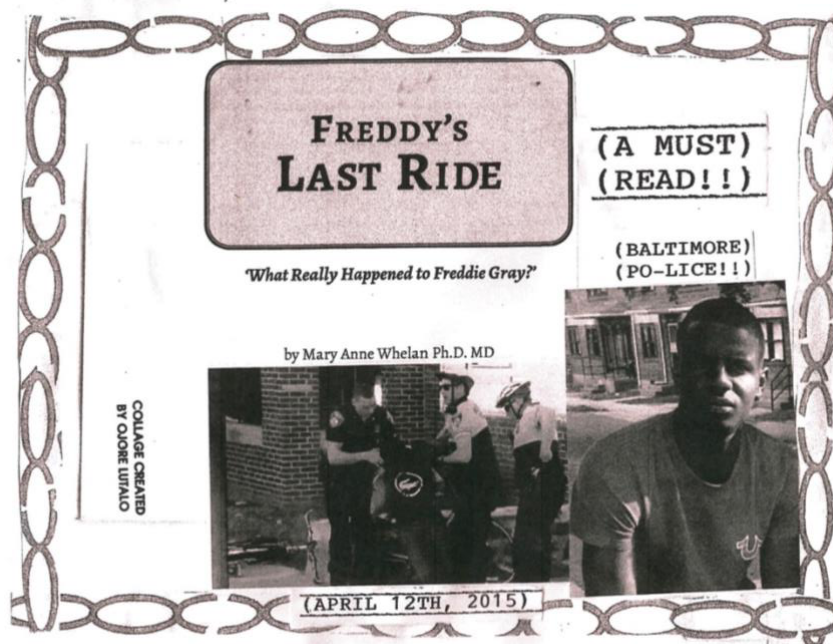
transport vans.” The default transport vans are what the prisoners call the dog kennel vans, which are windowless (except for the van back doors) steel-boxed vans with cushion-less steel benches. Prisoners are forced to sit with their knees bent due to the compartment’s steel wall directly in front of them. They report having to place their feet onto the divider in order to brace themselves for the vehicle’s movements and any sudden impacts. The seating position along with the windowless environment, seesaw motion, and swaying promote dizziness and motion sickness. It is also important to note that all prisoners being transported wear leg shackles and handcuffs which they describe as being very painful.



“Did I mention that a van ride might have felt like an hour but was actually no more than 60 seconds? Do you think you’d be able to remain upright, even while shackled, in a moving vehicle? Did skateboarding, surfing, or the subway leave you with the balance of a god? Well, just try it on your own floor: Lie down and get up without using your hands. You won’t succeed easily unless you hit on the experienced prisoners’ method, and by then you’ll have broken quite the sweat. I’m no ballerina and had to be shown the trick by old cons: Use your forehead as the missing point of leverage and push yourself into a crouch.”

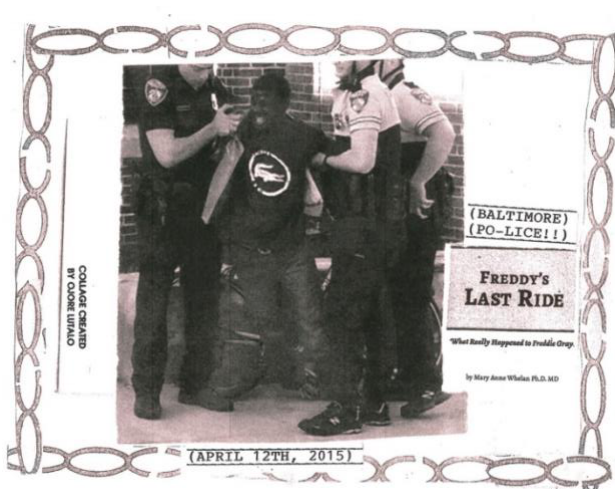
— Daniel Genis “The Pains I’ve Endured Inside Police Vans and Prison Buses”
Vice.com

National Cases



Freddie Gray

On April 12, 2015, Freddie Gray was arrested by Baltimore Police Department. After the transport ride to the police station, Gray's spine was almost completely severed, his neck was broken, and his voice box was injured. He died on April 19, 2015 from his [extensive injuries](#). Despite BPD's policy of requiring officers to buckle in prisoners using the van's seat belts, Freddie Gray was not in a seat belt. It is suspected that Gray experienced a "rough ride" during his tumultuous trip from arrest to the police station. ["Rough ride"](#) is a term to describe a form of police brutality and no touch torture that includes speeding, sudden stops, and sharp turns.

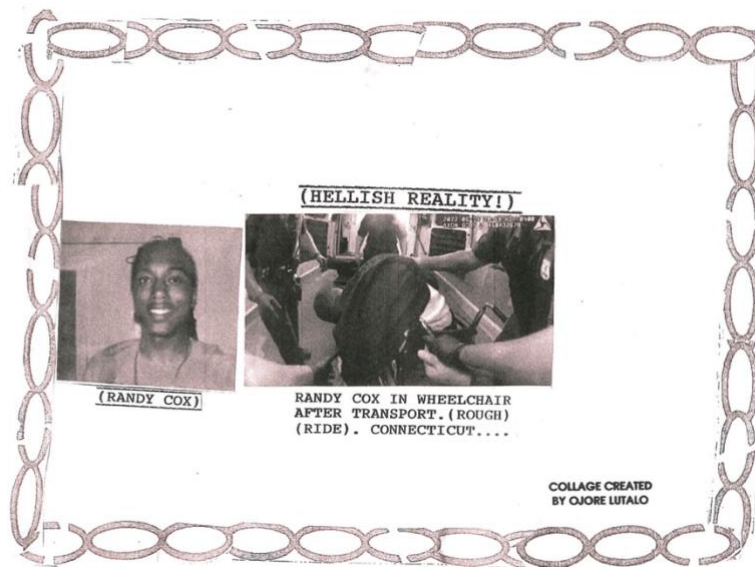


“A rough ride. Bringing them up front. A screen test. A cowboy ride. A nickel ride. Police say that intentionally banging a suspect around in the back of a van isn't common practice. But the range of slang terms to describe the practice suggests it's more common than anyone would hope—and a roster of cases show that Freddie Gray is hardly the first person whose serious injuries allegedly occurred while in police transit. Citizens have accused police of using aggressive driving to rough suspects up for decades in jurisdictions across the country. Though experts don't think it's a widespread practice, rough rides have injured many people, frayed relationships, and cost taxpayers, including Baltimore's, millions of dollars in damages.

-David A. Graham “‘Rough Rides’ and the Challenges of Improving Police Culture” The Atlantic

“I have been on many prison buses and I can tell you the guards driving the bus drive very recklessly. They take curves at dangerous speeds and don't account for the prisoners being handcuffed with a belly chain around their waist and shackled with no seatbelt. It's kind of like how they put Freddie Gray in the back of that police van in handcuffs without securing him and then drove crazy so he got banged around. And you saw the result of that.”

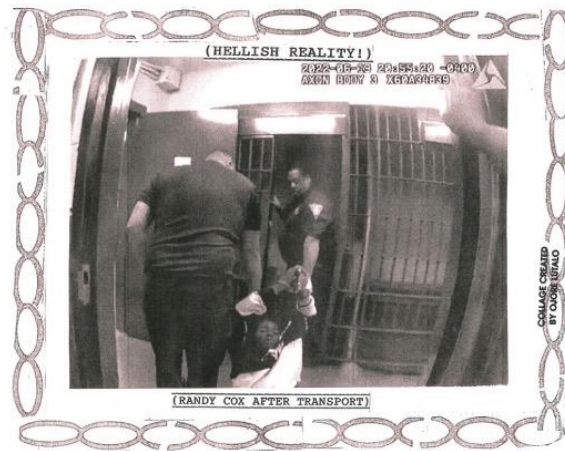
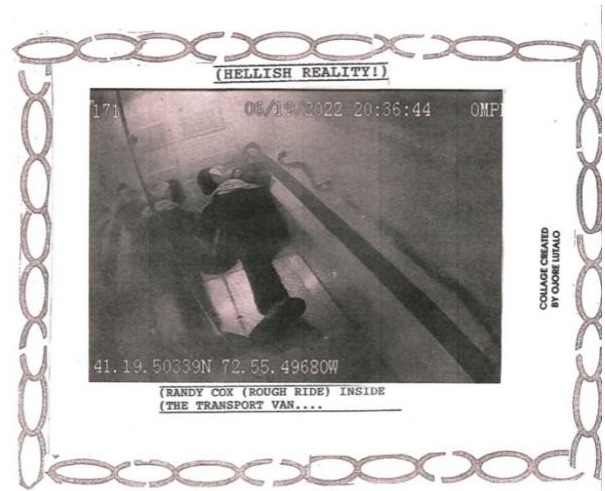
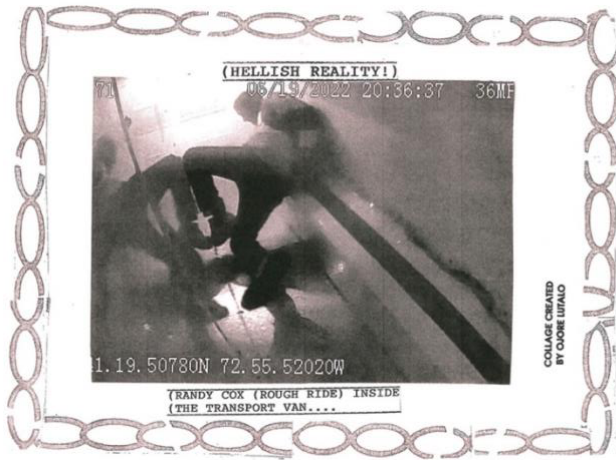
-Seth Ferranti “A Look at the Prisoner Transport System” HuffPost



Randy Cox

On June 19, 2022, Richard “Randy” Cox was arrested at a block party in New Haven, Connecticut. During his transport to the police station, the driving officer stopped short to supposedly “avoid a car accident,” resulting in Cox being thrown into the metal divider of the van headfirst. Officers dragged his limp body out of the van and did not believe that he was severely injured despite his pleas for help and repeatedly stating that he thought that his neck was broken. He required emergency spinal surgery and is now paralyzed from the chest down. The transport van did not have any seatbelts. [Five officers](#) have been placed on paid administrative leave while the incident is being investigated by the Connecticut state police.

In response to the backlash and media coverage from this preventable tragedy, [“Special Order 22 – 03, Prisoner Transportation”](#) was signed into New Haven Police Department policy on July 3, 2022. Some key requirements of this policy include the change of transport vans to marked police cruisers and a “Medical Miranda” provision that requires officers to proactively ask transported prisoners if they need medical assistance. If the prisoner answers yes, the officer must immediately seek out on-site medical help. While the policy states that the primary means of transporting prisoners will now be police cruisers, conveyance vans will still be used for “special circumstances” and when transporting prisoners to court. These conveyance vans will now have seatbelts, unlike the van that transported Cox. All prisoners being transported by police must be secured by a seatbelt while in transit. The policy also states that the officers shall not speed or use cellphones while transporting seatbelt-secured prisoners.



“This is Freddie Gray on video. Thank God, we got the video, so they can’t deny what happens. They can’t deny that they had a man handcuffed and put him in the back of this paddy wagon inappropriately and drove.”

- Ben Crump, Civil Rights attorney representing Randy Cox

New Jersey Prisoner Transport Testimonies



New Jersey State Prison (Trenton, NJ)

E.H. is an elderly blind man with various health issues, which makes frequent medical transportations necessary.

E.H. has fallen multiple times entering and exiting the “dog kennel vans” resulting in injuries to his lower back, shin, knee, and wrist. There is nothing to grab or hold onto when entering and exiting the slippery metal van, making prisoners prone to fall when handcuffed. E.H. explained, “There’s no way of stepping into these vans safely. I’m blind - there’s no rails, no handles to grab onto, there’s nothing.” Despite his serious medical conditions and blindness, E.H. was transported in these vans until he finally had enough of the injuries and refused to go on medical trips until his status was changed to the Wheelchair only/accessible van. He also spoke of the unsafe design of these transport vans and their unsanitary conditions. “The vans are so nasty it’s pathetic. They don’t bother cleaning or sanitizing them, they smell like urine, feces, vomit-- everything.” Describing the vans as a “sardine can,” E.H. emphasized the immense heat, improper ventilation, and flawed design of the vans. Prisoners must crouch over with knees hitting the metal divider since there is not enough room to sit up straight and everyone flies

forward when the driving officers brake, due to the absence of seatbelts. The constant speeding and reckless driving by transporting officers causes harm to both the prisoners and vans themselves according to E.H. He spoke of rides where the officers “tear up the vans” and keep driving despite obvious signs that there are maintenance issues with tires or other parts of the vehicles. These transport vans are especially dangerous for prisoners if there is an accident. “If the van flips over, runs off the road, or catches on fire there is no way to get out-- it’s a death trap. It’s a tomb.” According to E.H., even the officers complain about these vans because they feel unsafe in them as well. In addition to the aforementioned run-down and unsafe conditions, the officers cannot see what is going on in the back as there is a second set of doors that needs to be unlocked after the outside van doors to access the prisoners and there are no cameras. The lack of cameras as well as the inability of officers to easily access the prisoners and see into the back of the van while driving poses additional dangers for prisoners during medical emergencies. As E.H. states, “the officers have no idea if the prisoners are even breathing.”

— Phone Call from E.H. (New Jersey State Prison)

Ojore Lutalo was a prisoner at New Jersey State prison for 28 years. Considered a high-security political prisoner, Lutalo recalls police escorts with sirens in the front and rear of the van (that was more of an armored truck) on the trip to the Monmouth County Courthouse in Cherry Hill, NJ before his release in August 2009. As a result of his high-security status, Lutalo was forced to wear a heavy black box around his handcuffs in addition to the normal handcuffs, leg shackles, and belly chain. The black box is extremely tight and constricting, making it nearly impossible to move one’s wrists. Lutalo described the deep and painful gashes on his wrists from the black box that he would soothe by soaking in water once he returned to NJ State Prison. Lutalo describes the vans as extremely claustrophobic, “Inside the van it’s closed-built, like stepping into a coffin. It’s hot and you can’t see in or out, but they can see in the van.” He recalls putting his feet up against the divider in order to brace himself during the ride because they did not strap him in. Explaining the process of medical transports, Lutalo tells the disturbing story of a transport he had for a medical procedure at a hospital. When he first got into the van for the medical trip, the guard pulled out his gun and jacked a round off towards Lutalo. According to Lutalo, this was an obvious intimidation tactic and “meant he wanted to shoot me if he had the chance. The echo sound was so loud in the sally port.” During the van ride and even throughout the medical procedure, Lutalo was forced to wear metal handcuffs as well as other restraints such as leg irons. Demonstrating the inhumane treatment prisoners face even during medical procedures, Lutalo emphasizes how dehumanizing it was to have the guard in the room for his operation. The doctor asked the guard to leave the room for the procedure, but the guard explained that he could not leave Lutalo alone. The guard was given a white medical gown and he stayed for the

operation. At this point, Lutalo was so accustomed to this treatment that it felt routine to have every private moment surveilled by prison staff.

— Conversation with Ojore Lutalo (New Jersey State Prison; released August 26, 2009)

“I AM IN A LOT OF PAIN! It is well documented about my M.S. and arthritis. I injured my back in the transport van on February 23, 2016, coming from a court trip where I ‘fell’ inside the van. Then on January 23, 2017, I re-injured it while I was going on another trip, but it was cancelled and I only made it to Bordentown. I have been having problems ever since I informed medical. When I returned, I was given Motrin like it’s an elixir. On January 2, 2017, I put in a ‘inquire form’ with custody about the van not being ‘handicap accessible’ and they referred it to medical. I was called down on Saturday when no doctors were working. I was charged \$5.00. I put in a couple more inquiries and grievances and was told that I was properly charged. It was not a medical request, I should not have been charged, that does not address the issue with the van.”

—W. (New Jersey State Prison) This testimony was gathered for Issue 3: Medical Issues of “From the Inside Out.”

“They have begun oppressive treatment, now denying me mail and legal access. I previously won a lawsuit against the State and D.O.C. for the prison van overturning during a court trip temporarily paralyzing me. So it appears this new action is retaliation for that.”

—C. (New Jersey State Prison) This testimony was gathered for Issue 3: Medical Issues of “From the Inside Out.”

“I have a court trip coming up very soon. Medical can put in an order. Custody can provide a ‘handicap accessible van.’ When I went to the hospital, they used the medical van. My ailments and diseases have exacerbated. I’m trying to handle this without getting my family, the lawyers, or courts involved.”

—**S. (New Jersey State Prison)** This testimony was gathered for Issue 3: Medical Issues of “From the Inside Out.”

“For more than one year I have been trying to see the ear, nose, and throat doctor (E.N.T.) concerning my nostrils where I have trouble breathing. I made several complaints concerning no ventilation in the back of D.O.C. transportation vans. It causes the air to be stale, hot, and hard to breathe. I am one of many prisoners that have complained about these conditions. I was given a 90 day pass for ‘use of specialty van for transport not standard D.O.C. van.’ I was diagnosed with congestive heart failure, high blood pressure, and enlarged heart in the past and the lack of air can cause more complications with my heart. However, due to me filing a civil action against the medical department here at New Jersey State Prison, the medical department is refusing to renew my transportation pass and I am in dire need to see the ENT.”

—**S. (New Jersey State Prison)** This testimony was gathered for Issue 3: Medical Issues of “From the Inside Out.”

East Jersey State Prison (Rahway, NJ)

S.A.A. has an ongoing lawsuit against the N.J. D.O.C. due to injuries he sustained during a transport after receiving surgery for a chronic medical condition at Saint Francis Medical Center. The lawsuit alleges that the transportation of S.A.A. in the dog kennel vans violates the 8th amendment’s cruel and unusual punishment clause as well as the deliberate indifference clause. The lawsuit also cites violations of the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) 42 U.S.C. 12101 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, 29 U.S.C. 794, as well as violations of the NJ Constitution, NJ Civil Rights Act, and NJ Statutory and Common Law. The officers and doctor at East Jersey State Prison knowingly and intentionally subjected S.A.A. “to torturous Transportation Policy & Practice in maliciously brutal ‘Dog Kennel Transport Van’ ride (cruel and unusual)” and knowingly ignored his medical transport status of Wheelchair Van only (deliberate indifference). The officers refused to strap S.A.A. in and did not seek medical attention for the two prisoners in transit after the van crashed (deliberate indifference).

—**S. A. A. (East Jersey State Prison)** This testimony was gathered from a lawsuit brief we received in the mail.

“On April 8, 2022, while being transported from a medical trip at University Hospital, the van slammed into another vehicle on the NJ Turnpike (exit 14). J.M. suffered injuries to his neck, right arm, and right thigh. The yet to be heard claim was filed on May 5, 2022.”

—**J.M.** This testimony was gathered from a tort claim we received in the mail.

“NJ D.O.C. prisoner transport vehicles present one of the greatest threats to traffic safety in New Jersey. Carrying up to 15 passengers and weighing 10,000 or more pounds, these vehicles are operated at excessive and dangerous speeds by Corrections personnel who are often eating, smoking, or talking/texting on a cell phone. The doctor in charge here in 2014 told me 7 out of 10 inmates refused medical trips in those vans.”

—**N. (East Jersey State Prison)** This testimony was gathered for Issue 3: Medical Issues of “From the Inside Out.”

South Woods State Prison (Bridgeton, NJ)

S.M. is a diabetic who has to be transported to a hospital for dialysis twice a week. The physician has written orders that he should only be put in “soft” cuffs as his skin tears and swells easily due to long term dialysis. Although he has let us know that the soft cuffs are being placed on his wrists, his swollen and bruised legs are still being placed in chains and shackles during transport to the Hospital.” This is a violation of the N.J. Admin. Code 10A:3-9.12 – Medical Transportation which states, “(c) The use of mechanical restraints and equipment when transporting an inmate for hospitalization or treatment shall be governed by N.J.A.C. 10A:3-3 and **the nature of the illness or injury.**” The officers overriding orders from doctors also violates Section 10A:3-3.8 – Use of Mechanical Restraints which states, “(b) Mechanical restraints shall not be used as punishment, **or in any way that causes undue physical discomfort, inflicts physical pain or restricts the blood circulation or breathing of the inmate.**” The mistreatment and abuse S.M. faced during medical transportations was seen and confirmed to the Prison Watch Program by other prisoners while we collected prisoner transport van testimonies.

—S.M. (South Woods State Prison)

Northern State Prison (Newark, NJ)

C.S. filed a lawsuit against the NJ D.O.C. and the NJ D.O.C.'s Central Transport Unit (CTU) in March 2020. The two main issues cited in this lawsuit are the transportation he received while attending medical appointments outside of the prison and the medical care (or lack thereof) he has received while incarcerated at Northern State Prison. According to C.S., the type of prison transport vans used by the NJ D.O.C. CTU was changed between 2014-2015. During this period, he was injured on two different medical trips from Saint Francis Hospital. He describes the vans: "prisoners were seated on steel seats that did not fit a person's torso while handcuffed and leg shackled." In addition to the layout of the van, C.S. explains that the vans were driven "in excess of ninety miles-per hour while on the highway as they swerved in and out of traffic." The speeding in conjunction with the van's design caused C.S. to become airborne and bounce around the vehicle, causing multiple injuries. C.S. suffers from severe coronary artery disease and claims that he was supposed to be transported back to Northern State Prison in a wheelchair-accessible van or in the back of an ambulance. C.S. also suffers from prominent degenerative changes and is in constant excruciating pain. The severity of his injuries and pain can be traced to his transports in the prison vans. In April 2016, C.S. went to Saint Francis Hospital for right inguinal hernia surgery. Less than 25 minutes after C.S. exited the operating room, he was rushed out of the hospital with the I.V. still in his arm and wheeled to the loading dock for the trip back to Northern State Prison. He was crammed into one side of the van with 5 other prisoners. C.S. explains, "5 inmates were already over the limit by one inmate, (the limit was 4 inmates on each side) and with me now there was no space. I ended up riding on the floor, propped up by placing my arm on the seat and the other cuffed hand trying its best to support it, to avoid further injury during the trip. At one end of the section, an inmate had gotten sick from being bounced off the walls of the vans as it swerved in and out of traffic on the NJ Turnpike, and he proceeded to vomit which made the other cramped inmates visibly sick and nauseous. The blood that was supposed to have been stopped from the I.V. site dripped slowly down my arm onto the floor and made a stream headed up towards the front of the van. Blood and vomit, no ventilation; bouncing back and forth, off the walls..." During an October 2018 transport to a medical appointment, C.S. was bounced around and ended up on the floor of the van. As a result of this trip, C.S. had an umbilical hernia, bilateral hydroceles, and bruises all over his body.

—C.S. (Northern State Prison) This testimony was gathered from a lawsuit against the NJ D.O.C. and NJ D.O.C. Central Transport Unit (CTU).

“I sustained several serious injuries during transport to therapy due to the metal ankle cuff cutting off circulation and the officer’s erratic driving behavior. I was violently slammed forward into the partition where I was knocked unconscious. I was raced to St. Francis Hospital where I was given seven stitches. My other injuries are in my back, neck, and shoulder and at times the physical therapist will see me... I am in constant pain, always having headaches.”

—**A. (Northern State Prison)** This testimony was gathered for Issue 3: Medical Issues of “From the Inside Out.”

Edna Mahan Correctional Facility (Clinton, NJ)

“On June 24, 2022 I, was forcefully removed from Edna Mahan Correctional Facility. It took 15-20 officers to forcefully restrain me onto a stretcher and place me into a van, several officers yanked and pulled at the restraints so tight that I now have numbness and lack of feeling in my right arm and leg. They laughed as I screamed in pain and begged for an officer to allow me to file a PREA complaints regarding a sex assault that happened to me. Others attempted to hit me in my lower body and bend my fingers so forcefully that I heard one crack. A Lieutenant stated "we have direct orders from the Director to remove you from this prison. I was forced to ride in a stretcher that at every turn tightened the restraints on my arm and legs pure hell, no medical personal was on the van to say if this was safe for transportation. six officer accompanied without no where to sit so they held the stretcher often pulling it while the van made turns, causing me pain. What made things worst ...An administrator came by while I was crying in pain and said ‘Good Job Guys.’ This only encouraged the officers to continue their abuse.”

— **Email from D.M.**

We recently received a report about a pregnant prisoner’s recent medical transportation to her prenatal care appointments in June. According to L.B., “the CO driving the medical transport van operated the vehicle at speeds as high as ninety (90) miles an hour, and in a manner that was enough to cause cervical bleeding as an apparent result of the trip.” Consequently, L.B. needed to be seen by ER doctors on that same day. She reported the dangerous behavior to her doctors, to the Edna administration, and to the Central Office. L.B. is extremely concerned that “continued unsafe medical transport conditions are a risk to her and her pregnancy, and fears a repeat performance.”

—**L.B. (Edna Mahan Correctional Facility)**

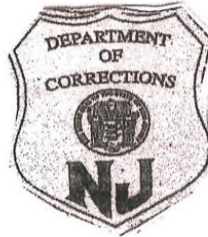
Prisoner Transport Van Crashes in New Jersey (a non-exhaustive list)

- **Westhampton Township crash** (August 1st 2022)
 - At approximately 9:40 am on Monday August 1st, 2022 an NJ D.O.C. van collided with a van operated by the Friends of Cyrus program. The front of the D.O.C. van was heavily damaged and ten people were hospitalized as a result of the crash. Three prisoners, three officers, three children, and the driver of the other van were hospitalized with non-life-threatening injuries. According to the Westhampton Township police, the Friends of Cyrus van failed to stop at a stop sign and was consequently struck by the D.O.C. van. While the D.O.C. van may not have caused the crash, the implementation of seatbelts in transport vans may have prevented the injuries sustained by the prisoners and their subsequent hospitalizations.
- **Millville crash** (January 21st 2016)
 - At approximately 1:43 pm on Thursday January 21st, 2016 one prisoner died because of a crash involving an NJ D.O.C. van and a tractor trailer on southbound Route 55. The police state that the D.O.C. van slammed into the rear of a flatbed truck hauling a disabled vehicle, killing one prisoner and injuring five other people, including another prisoner and two prison guards. Jerry Siracusa (44 years old) was identified as the prisoner who was killed during a transport to Bayville State Prison.
- **Deerfield Township crash** (August 2013)
 - Shortly before 2 pm on a Friday, an NJ D.O.C. van transporting eight prisoners who were part of a labor detail from South Woods Prison was involved in a crash in Deerfield Township. The accident occurred during the trip back to South Woods and left three prisoners injured. The three prisoners were hospitalized for their injuries, but details of their specific injuries were not disclosed.
- **Maurice River Township crash** (October 2009)
 - At approximately 11:40 am, an NJ D.O.C. van heading south on Route 55 crashed after it traveled across the west-side shoulder, went off the roadway, and then overturned. The van was occupied by two corrections officers and two prisoners who were being transported from East Jersey State Prison to Bayview Correctional Facility. NJ State Troopers extricated one of the officers and the town prisoners from the overturned van. The two prisoners and the van's driver sustained minor

injuries while the other officer, Samuel Maccarone, was flown by state police medivac helicopter for treatment of critical injuries. Officer Maccarone lost his right arm due to injuries he sustained during the crash.

**DOG KENNEL TRANSPORT VANS
(HELLISH REALITY!)**

15. There are approximately three (3) types of Transport vans in use within "N.J.D.O.C.": a) Wheelchair Van; b) Traditional Caged Cushioned Bench Vans and; c) Dog Kennel Transport Vans. d) Dog Kennel Vans, transport compartments are windowless (except for Van back doors) steel boxed vans, with cushion-less steel benches; e) Inmates sit horizontal to drive and motion of movement (*this seating coupled with windowless environment & seesaw motion & Left/Right Sway*) promotes dizziness and motion sickness; f) Inmates are forced to sit prone in FETAL like position with chin to chest due to diagonal slope of compartments roof; g) Inmates are forced to sit with knees bent due to compartments steel wall directly in front of them. NOTING: All inmates wear Leg Shackles & Hand Cuffs that are chained around their waist.



**COLLAGE CREATED
BY OJORE LUTALO**

Restraints, Handcuffs, and the Infamous Black Box During Transports

“I typically had painfully chafed wrists after one of those epic bus rides, injuries that lasted a day. And my cuffs were rarely that tight—nothing was said, but I knew this was a reward for my white skin. I’ve seen what happens to hands after a day in cuffs that were deliberately tightened. They swelled into perverse balloons, no longer black but blue. As abrasive as the steel cuffs were, the black box was worse. It’s a steel attachment covering the chain between the two cuffs. Then it’s fiendishly padlocked to a body chain circling the torso. This ghoulish getup left one only a six-inch range of hand movement.”

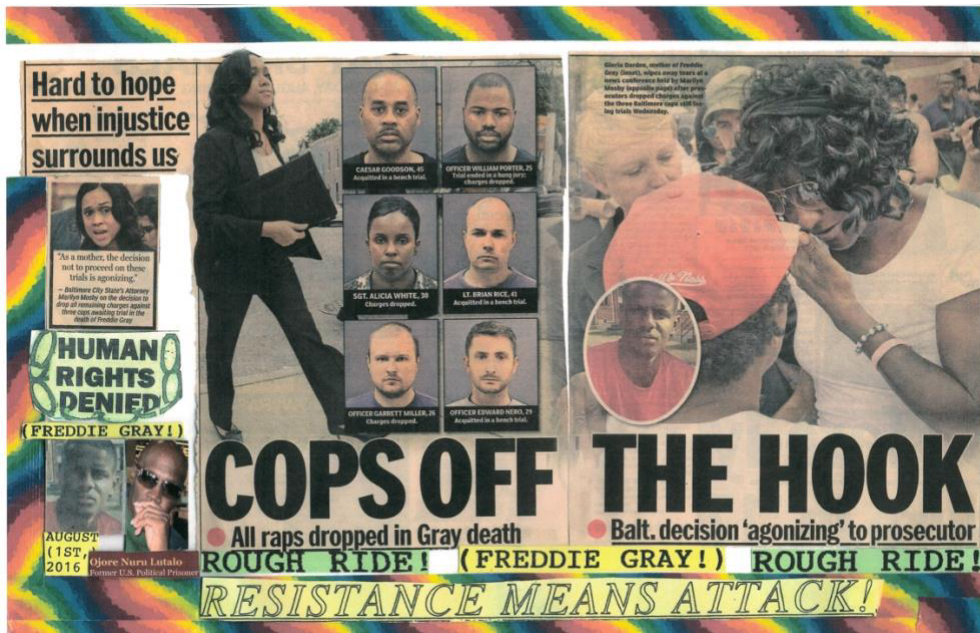
—**Daniel Genis “The Pains I’ve Endured Inside Police Vans and Prison Buses”**
Vice.com

“Diesel Therapy”

“As our nation’s politicians, from the president down, contemplate overhauling our country’s criminal justice policies, a serious look needs to be taken at how prisoners are transported. Because with the lack of uniform regulations, insufficient correctional officer training, and security trumping safety at all times, it’s amazing there haven’t been more fatalities. In the federal system, prisoners call transit ‘diesel therapy’ and it’s one of the worst aspects of being locked up. Nobody looks forward to a transfer from one prison to another and transit is the reason why.”

-Seth Ferranti “A Look at the Prisoner Transport System” *HuffPost*

Recommended Reading



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Conclusion

This newsletter is only scratching the surface of prisoner transport issues considering that every state has different policies and there is a lack of transparency regarding incidents. The only information on D.O.C. van crashes can be found on news websites, which is not an accurate number of accidents. We receive many reports of crashes and incidents that are not publicized. We are calling for more research to be done on prisoner transportation. The Department of Corrections and transporting officers must take into account the medical conditions and disabilities of incarcerated people before, during, and after transportation. The reckless driving and excessive speeding during transports speaks to the necessity of a cultural shift among the officers and transportation units. Drawing on policy changes made by the New Haven Police Department after the paralysis of Randy Cox, we recommend the implementation of seat belts and cameras in transportation vans to promote both safety and accountability. Transportation vans should be sanitized and inspected regularly to ensure the safety of everyone on the road.

While the focus of this newsletter is transport issues under the Department of Corrections, it is important to note that there are also extensive issues within the private prisoner transport industry. Private prisoner transport companies profit off of each prisoner by mile, so there is an incentive to cram as many prisoners as possible into the vans. There are countless reports and lawsuits related to car accidents, unsafe and unsanitary conditions, sexual assault, and medical neglect during private transports.

It is in the very best interest of prisoners, the Department of Corrections, prison staff, and the general public that prisoner transportation and the transport vans themselves are safe.

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