

each of you carry one body each

Janet Kuypers

four of us would carry one of the dead bodies to bring it to the fire pit the guards saw this, stopped us "no no no, each of you carry one body each" then they showed us

you see, you take a stick put it under their neck and drag them behind you like they were a rag or a piece of garbage

this is what they taught us

then they showed us how to do it



uncuffed and printed

Janet Kuypers

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When I was arrested they put handcuffs (a little too tight) around my wrists, behind my back.

They put me in the back of their squad car, took me to their headquarters,

a little building you can only get to through the off ramp of the expressway.

They sat me down, uncuffed one hand, cuffed the other to the bench.

Tried to charm them, so I might get off easy.

so I tried to be pleasant, and I must have sweet talked them, I didn't go to jail — but not before they uncuffed me from the bench

and led me to the large ink pad. "Now, we'll move your fingers,

don't try to help," they say, and seem quite pleased by taking your prints to add to their permanent government records.

Lucky you. you're a part of the system now.

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After a cop drops you off at your place

wave to them, be courteous and smile, then close that door and lock yourself in.

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RAP SHEET

Now you're alone, left with your thoughts.

It's a frightening thought, it's a frightening feeling. You've always thought

it won't happen to you. Getting caught was never an option.

You never want to scrub your skin of fingerprint ink

(out, out damned spots, out damned evidence that you are now trapped in their damned system).

It might be a relief when you're finally uncuffed, but you're not.

You're a part of their system now, even if, after they've taken your prints, they let you out into the world again.

Now, how does it feel to be free.

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RAP SHEET

entering courtroom 101

Janet Kuypers

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The day arrived. We searched for street parking and hoped the rain would stop.

Opened the door, where we all waited to drop our objects into a bin, to walk through a metal detector, to stick out your arms and spread your legs so guards with wands scan us.

Found our way to courtroom 101.

Read the sign on the door, "Only one person per court case is permitted within these walls." So, I knew it was time. We said an abrupt good-bye.

I walked in panicked, what does my lawyer look like, what if I'm called up and she isn't here, what do I do.

There were three rows of bench seats, so I just sat down, close to the door.

Rows of chairs flanked the right wall instead of these benches. I figured that's where the lawyers sit.

I checked my watch. Court should have started ten minutes ago.



A lawyer called a Hispanic name. A man came out from my row. I moved my legs so he could leave courtroom 101 with his lawyer. Eventually a woman in a business suit skirt and knee-high galoshes walked over and called my name. We left courtroom 101 to talk.

She told me, apparently this is common just answer the judge's questions. She'll take care of the rest.

Came back — my seat was taken, but they made room for me. Looked at my watch again. It's twenty-five minutes since court should have begun.

The judge walked in. They told everyone to be quiet, and asked one man to remove his cap. The bailiff called a name I didn't know; someone walked to the red line, and they started their drill, and the din in courtroom 101 grew.

One defendant down. Then another. Then another. My mind just started to go numb, like... Like I just jumped out of an airplane.

No. It's not like that... I've jumped out of an airplane, that's something I chose to do. I didn't choose this.

But, like falling 120 MPH, and, like courtroom 101, I couldn't catch my breath. I couldn't breathe.



I heard my first name, then my last name, pronounced wrong. I walked to the line. My lawyer walked to the bench.

The judge then asked for my name. I pronounced it, correctly. The judge then spoke. "With this charge, you could be sentenced to up to one year in prison. Are you aware of these charges?"

Yes.

The din of courtroom 101 grew louder. "You do not have to be in court for your sentencing; you may be sentenced without being present. Do you understand the value in appearing at your trial?

Yes.

That's when my lawyer started to talk her lawyer talk, they nodded, set a date for me to come back, loud enough for me to hear. I agreed. Then I was free to go.

I have to come back to courtroom 101 where they decide what to do with me, while I sit in silence, then stand in silence, and acquiesce. That sounds so like me.

We walked out. I looked for my ride. Me knees started to buckle. And I tried to breathe again.



Vent

Janet Kuypers

5/5/15, edited for show 5/20/15

As a part of my bargaining before sentencing, I have to go through "group evaluation" sessions...

There's like a dozen of us in here, and we all just sit here and shut up and look around and wait.

The wall's rooms are painted blue. Kind of like an institutional blue... But I don't even know what an institutional blue looks like.

The walls make me think of Pepto-Bismol, but not pink. It's like they're a Pepto-Bismol blue.

On one wall, there's a motivational poster for Opportunity. It says, "If opportunity doesn't knock, build a wall."

I'm building my walls, I'll scoop out the mortar, slather that grout so thick that no one can move the bricks or hear me scream.

Like this place is gonna do me an ounce of good. I know I played my cards right and was nice to the cops, but that one cop —

the one who's bald on top of his head and has this completely hideous ring of hair circling his skull like ear warmers — I'd like to take a stainless steel spade and bash his fucking head in, but once he fell to the ground, I'd take an ice pick

and pop each one of his tiny little beady ugly eyes, then spear his tongue with that ice pick so he could taste his eye juice.

Then I'd get the solid steel mallet and split that monk-like head of his open, and then I'd get one of those gardening hand forks,

and while his blood coagulates I'd scrape and sculpt his brain bits out in front of him into the shape of a middle finger,

so I could say "fuck you, cop" in front of what's left of his oozing eyes so he could see how much he's despised,

and he'd see how little brain that little piece of shit has left.

And the funny thing

is that he's not even the guy that arrested me.

Oh, but session is about to start, where they'll ask us to tell the group about our crimes. I don't know why, or how that will help us.

But, time to start the show, turn that frown upside-down and act like you want to be here, because it's just one more step 'til it's all over

and you're finally free.



RAP SHEET

Janet Kuypers

5/18/15, edited for show 5/20/15

I've been pacing, mentally racing, I can't sleep.

I've been accused. Now, doing something illegal was never a problem,

but being arrested by cops with guns for their uniform,

well, that makes it hard to clear my head. So I call my lawyer again.

"Have you looked at their evidence? Do you have the video?"

I called a few times, and a day before trial for my sentencing,

the lawyer calls and says, "I'm looking at the video now,

and I can't see any reason why the cop stopped you to arrest you. I think we can fight this." I'm a bit stunned, I haven't seen the evidence.

"Are you sure? Can you check again?" And he did, ten times total,

and he saw no evidence to stop me, then arrest me for committing a crime;

there was no justification. That's when I started to smile.

"So is this something we can beat?" And he said "Sure,

the next court date will be easy, you won't say a word,

I'll just file for a motion to quash the arrest

and suppress evidence. There was no reason to stop you,

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so we'll fight this." Wow, I'm starting to get my happy face again.

Yeah, it means more trial time, but if the cop

was in the wrong (wait a minute, can I sue him

for all the pain he's unjustly caused?), if he was wrong,

then trust me, sometimes the only option is fighting.

Which is exactly what I'll do. I'm not out yet — they may think they've won, but they have no idea

how well I can fight. You picked the wrong person to try,

because now you've made a mortal enemy. I'll pit you against yourself,

trust me, I am a more than worthy adversary. I can still play fair

and catch you fumbling over your own mistakes.

So... the fight is officially on. And may the true

winner prevail.

SUSPECT RAP SHEET

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