

Helpful Information for New Writers:

Hello New Writers!

My name is Loen Kelley (female). I'm a former television journalist with decades of experience working for CBS News, CNN, PBS and CNBC. I developed an interest in prison after the subject of one of my documentaries was sent to prison and he started telling me about what goes on inside, which horrified me. That's when I decided to start Prison Writers – back in 2015, to get the truth out by giving prisoners a voice.

So what should you write about? Well, is there a story you tell people more than others because it's unforgettable or funny or bizarre or terrifying? As long as it's about prison, you should write about that because you know it so well and it's probably a pretty good story.

IF NOT, HERE ARE SOME TOPIC SUGGESTIONS:

- *Anything funny* that happened in prison.
- What you'd change about prison if you were in charge — and why? What kind of prison programs do you WISH were offered — and why?
- Tell us what got you into prison, how did your childhood play a role, describe your childhood, what led up to your crime, describe the crime itself and tell us how you feel about it today.
- How gangs operate in the various prisons you've been in.
- Stories about corruption, theft, abuse or smuggling.

WHAT NOT TO WRITE ABOUT:

- The intricate legal details of your particular case.
- A story about a medical condition – unless it's life or death.
- A rambling essay about a bunch of different things that don't tie together.
- Research reports on prison topics, let's leave that to the experts with Internet access!

TIPS:

- Be sure you can describe what your story is about in one sentence. If you can't, that means you're trying to do too many things in one story. Come up with one theme or one story and stick to it.
- We're not looking for "model prisoners" stories. We're looking for authentic and real. So if the truth is messy, violent or unflattering — don't bother sugar-coating it.
- No previously published stories will be considered.
- We don't publish poetry or fiction or artwork, sorry!
- If you handwrite your story, please make the writing easy to read.
- *Show instead of Tell:* Let's say you want to write about how guards mistreat prisoners on a daily basis. Well, instead of just listing all the things they do, try to think of real life examples of how they do it.

IMPORTANT NOTES:

- Word count: 500-2000.
- If we like your submission, we'll be back in touch with editing suggestions or, if it's good enough to publish, we'll send you your payment (\$10) for publishing it!
- Don't forget to write your name on your story!
- Please include a short bio and a photo with your next letter in case we accept your submission.
- Photos will not be returned unless specifically requested.

Send stories to:

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Thanks and good luck!
Loen