

So I Laughed

Only four more days to go. It was funny to me, as it would be for most in my situation, so I laughed. Time seems to lurch forward much slower when you are dreading something - but ironically, I wanted my days to be slower. It was funny to me, so I laughed. The first genuine laugh I have had in 3 months. The last time was when they brought me jello for dinner; it wiggled nonstop as one of them set it down before me.

It was funny to me, so I laughed.

But laughing was getting hard at this point. I could see my breath in front of me, clouding my future path up the mountain, however far that would be. The lack of oxygen up there was starting to get to me, so laughter had to be stowed away for later. Each step up the side of the iced over and rocky terrain pained my legs, but it was a good pain. It's hard to feel this type of pain in my old room, so the change was nice.

That made me think of other changes in my life. I remember the day Mr. Richards came to my room for the last time, explaining how my life was going to be changing. He always had a hopeful grin across his lips as he greeted me with a "Hello, Davis," but this time, something in him changed. Hope was replaced with some realization, and the realization conformed to the words:

Our request was overruled. Everything that could have been done was done, so the fight is over for us.

Mr. Richards was a good friend. I hope he got paid well.

I was out about 300 yards when the sirens rang through the dry air. It had no effect on my pace, and why should it? In a matter of minutes they would follow my tracks in the snow, all leading to the leisurely pace of the grey shoes on my feet. I had gotten so far without anyone noticing in my first encounter with sunlight in years, yet I've had unrelenting eyes follow my every move until this point.

So I simply walked out. It was funny to me, so I laughed.

Laughter wasn't a common thing I saw in prison. Matter of fact, emotion wasn't something I saw in prison very frequently. They had to keep the other guys away from me - that they would "enact a justice on me that wasn't theirs to give." I didn't see why it mattered *how* it happened; they were just wasting their money at this point. But they kept me around for 5 years as I would ponder this justice, and now it was only 4 days away. 4 slow days.

At that point, I had walked about as far as I wanted to walk, so I sat down on a large barren stone, protruding from the mountain side. I ran my fingers across its course surface, a surface so different and so much more natural than the cold, metallic beds and chairs they

allowed me to rest on for the past 5 years. Like the bleached hallways of prison, the imperfections of the rock softly guided my fingers up and down as my hand moved from one spot to the next. I wish I could have heard the noise of my skin sliding along the face of it, but the repetitive chopping of a helicopter was invading my headspace.

I have always been good at blocking noises out of my mind. The numerous trials I heard from the rage-stricken lawyers, witnesses, and judges had registered as much in my mind as the chopping I was hearing from the blades of the aircraft. They would say their part, point their fingers at me or Mr. Richards, and sit back down. They never had anything new to say, so I always paid no heed.

I remember thinking how I probably looked quite deranged sitting there, staring off into space as they talked about me. It was funny to me, so I laughed.

Now, I similarly stared off at the adjacent mountains stretching into the sky. My mind ignored the helicopter, barks from the dogs, and shouts as the men approached. However, I did focus on what would come next for me.

They will ask me for my last meal in a handful of days. I will tell them jello.

They will ask me for my last phone call. I will tell them Mr. Richards.

They will ask me for my thoughts. I will tell them "*it's justice.*"

And they will watch and listen in my final room, wishing they could block out the noise.

It will be funny to me, so I will laugh.