

The Bathroom Police  
by May Cotton  
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In my secret fantasy, I am Commander in Chief of the Bathroom Police. I take my job very seriously. The comfort of women everywhere depends upon my judgments. At airports and in theaters, restaurants and department stores, office buildings and subway stations I do my dirty work.

I stand patiently in line, waiting for the handicapped stall to be free. I lie to the women who look at me askance, citing my inability to stand up again from the low toilets in the regular stalls. I leave inspection of those heinous torments of structural design to my subordinates. Let the smaller women in the Corps struggle with doors that are too narrow, stalls that are too shallow, stools that are too short for full-sized women. I stand in line for women everywhere who wait for the door that opens outwards.

I long to punish the idiot architects and mindless mechanical engineers who deign to design bathrooms that are unfit for real people. Long ago I gave up attempting to use toilets in stalls with doors that open inward. One should not be forced to straddle the toilet in unladylike disgrace in order to close the bathroom door. It was when I learned that all doors open inward because there are only three manufacturers of toilet stall doors — all of whom use the same design — that I began my mental rampage. I have silently cursed both the designers and manufacturers for years. Now I find I can be silent no more.

Instead I will recruit others to join me in the Bathroom Police Corps. Together we will go out and test the thoughtless designs of men who dare to believe they understand the needs of women. Do disabled women not carry purses or need to shed their jackets before they pee? Why are there never hooks on which to hang one's bag or coat in the handicapped stalls?

And those ridiculous giant rolls of toilet paper! I foresee punishment in the next life for the dolt who designed these things. Who in their right mind would mount them *under* the grab bar, where one must practically stand on one's head to get a wad of paper. Combine this unfortunate design oversight with the new automatic flush toilets cropping up everywhere, and anyone can understand my rage. What's that? You say you don't understand? Well let me spell it out for you.

Automatic flush toilets operate with an electronic "eye" that "notices" when the back of the person sitting on the toilet moves out of it's range of "vision." Sit yourself down on one of these monsters and then bend forward to get your toilet paper. What happens? The electronic eye thinks you have stood up, and it proceeds to activate the automatic flush mechanism, instantly bathing your bare bottom with water from the toilet bowl — not to mention with what your body just deposited in the bowl. Fie on the misogynists who install these things and turn the water pressure up too high.

So I will embark on my campaign, writing expensive citations to business owners and public pundits that trust architects and don't bother to ask women what kinds of bathrooms we need. My grading system will be simple: P you pass, F you fail, with a P-minus for bathrooms that are almost up to code. MY code, not the government's.

And what will it take to pass my code? Let's start with an unending supply of toilet seat covers, toilet paper and paper towels. And don't even think of trying to subject me to toilet paper that doubles as sandpaper. I'd better see the diaper changing table outside of the handicapped

stall, so I don't have to wait on some woman's kid being diapered when I have to go! Beware of toilet seats that are too small for the fixture, forcing ample bottoms to spread over onto the cold porcelain. Sanitary napkin disposal boxes must be within reach of sitting on the stool. I will not tolerate privacy locks that do not operate. Toilet seats must be bolted down firmly. The list goes on.

In my campaign to wipe out inadequate rest room facilities, I will appear in random places, clipboard in hand. If I find there is no dry shelf upon which to place my clipboard, an automatic failure shall ensue. All public rest rooms must be kept spotlessly clean and dry, no exceptions. Certain airlines, at least, have the good grace to post signs suggesting that users be considerate of other passengers and wipe up after themselves. (Never mind that all airliners have bathrooms that are completely inaccessible to large or otherwise disabled persons, bathrooms which automatically provoke claustrophobia.)

In my secret fantasy as head of the Bathroom Police, I shall cite owners and users alike. It will not take long in my Bathroom Police State to train contractors to provide adequate rest room facilities and teach the public to treat them well. Don't let me catch you leaving water on the counter next to the basin, or dropping your paper towel on the floor. Just leave your used tampon under the porcelain or let your little boy hose down the seat without wiping it up. After I'm through with your bank account, you'll never let that happen again.

But your fines will be nothing compared to what I will levy against the building operators. They will simply pay up and fix up because we Bathroom Police will have absolute control. No lawsuits will be filed to fight our citations. I will rule in the Bathroom Police State, and soon all public bathrooms in the world will meet my standards. And you will rise to my standards as well. If you are not civilized enough to leave a public bathroom as clean as you found it, kindly leave your bodily functions at home.