



# Why is this woman tied up?

by Sid Ross and  
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**T**his is an old woman with a one-way ticket to oblivion. PARADE's photographer found her tied to a chair to keep her quiet in Boston State Hospital, a state mental institution. Equally disturbing pictures can be taken in many mental institutions throughout the country, which have been turned into dumping grounds for thousands of oldsters—people with no place else to go. Most of them aren't really mentally ill. In the jargon of hospital bureaucracy, they are classified as "inappropriate admissions." But since society has nothing better to offer, they're left to rot without hope, help or dignity. Their usual exit is death.

Often through no fault of their own, understaffed and overcrowded mental hospitals handle their "geriatric cases" little better than cattle. PARADE's investigation found a recurrent pattern of elderly patients locked into wards to prevent their wandering about, given steady doses of tranquilizers to keep them "manageable," left day and night without a trace of human warmth or companionship. In Philadelphia State Hospital, PARADE saw a ward full of elderly, tranquilized patients, bodies bloated from their sedentary, meaningless existence, sitting listlessly on hard benches, or sprawled asleep on the floor. In Central State Hospital, Indianapolis, women, silent as statues, occupied chairs and rockers in the corridors. In Anoka State Hospital, Minnesota, while the weather was beautiful outdoors, a group of old men apathetically shuffled about the top floor of a geriatric "cottage," with nowhere to go and nothing to do.

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