Bridges Are a Lot Like Long Corridors

by Foster Trecost

Nothing good ever waits at the end of a long corridor. I made it half way down before turning around, but turned back after a few steps. At the counter a lady asked if she could help me, and I said I needed to speak to someone about something I had seen. She asked if what I had seen broke the law, and I said it had. She pointed to a row of wooden chairs lined against the wall. The one closest to the counter was different from the others, and that's the one I chose.

The wait didn't last long, which I appreciated because I didn't have much wait in me. I hadn't eaten since before the law-breaking, which would be okay if the crime had been committed only an hour earlier, but it had been many hours. In those hours I hadn't slept, either. So when a door opened, I stood, even before I knew if it had opened for me. A man motioned me to follow him, and led me down another long corridor. We went to a small room and sat on either side of a tiny table. He waited for me to talk, and I waited for him to talk, so we looked at each other without saying anything.

I spoke first: “I saw someone get killed.” His face didn't move. “And I saw what they did with the body.” His face moved a little, but only to say, “Go on.” They were his first words, but before I could continue, he pulled a notepad from his coat pocket and wrote several lines of notes. I wondered what he was writing, since I hadn't said anything, but realized he was playing catch-up. Only after I offered something worth remembering did he begin to write it down.

“Bridges are a lot like long corridors.” I said, pleased with the line, but he was not, and didn't write it down. “Some nights I walk the steel bridge and climb the trestle. From there I count boats, but they can be tricky to spot, especially the small ones, so I count cars,

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too. Last night neither number reached very high.” I made it up as I went, and gained an unfounded momentum that pleased me, and seemed to please him, because he wrote everything. I hated to end the story so soon, but it was almost over, and the momentum was about to die with the death I had seen. That part wasn't made up. “A dark car came to a quick stop. Two men got out. There was talking, but nothing I could understand. Then a gunshot. Then a splash. The dark car sped away. That's all.”

He wrote furiously, but I was glad he took notes instead of recording. Notes can be argued if the need arises, but recordings are much more difficult to discredit. Then he asked a series of questions, all to which I answered no. Then he asked if there was anything I wanted to add, and I answered no to this, too. He took my number and escorted me back through the long corridors.

And that was my confession. It lacked details, but I felt better for having given it. He was both policeman and priest, though unaware of being a priest. Sometimes I wonder if I should have stumbled into a church instead. I always thought churches and police stations were a lot alike. I guess cops and priests are, too.