

Bars Block the View

I have been in jail twice in my life. I didn't find that the experience rehabilitated me from any of my bad habits. The accommodation was adequate and provided a good night sleep. I came out of jail both times none the worse for wear and not significantly better off for the time spent behind bars. The first time I was confined to a jail cell was in Kungsbacka, Sweden. Kungsbacka made a very favourable impression on me as soon as I arrived. I had never seen so many young, beautiful girls in one place. After about 10 minutes of unsuccessful hitch-hiking and watching a veritable beauty pageant passing by I decided to spend a little time here.

First, I had to find a place to stay. Kungsbacka is a small community with a population of 15,000 so accommodation was limited. I was en route hitch-hiking from Oslo to Copenhagen at the time and it had been a long day. I was tired and fed up with wandering around trying to find a place to sleep and that is when I passed the local jail. I went in and asked the burly officer behind the desk if he knew where I could spend the night. He stared at me for a few moments and said, "Come with me". He led me to the back of the jail to an empty cell. He said to wait a moment and he proceeded to make up a bed. He told me I could sleep in the cell. He apologized that he had to lock the cell door because that was a regulation. He bid me good night and I fell asleep. The next morning a second burly officer woke me up at 8:00 o'clock with a cup of coffee. I drank my coffee, thanked him and was on my way. The next couple of days in Kungsbacka were much more comfortable.

My second incarceration was in Munich, Germany. I had been in Munich for 2 days staying at a Youth Hostel. On the third night in Munich I was out with some friends and arrived back at the hostel at 11:30. I had completely forgotten that the hostel closes at 10:00. It was late at night and once again I had no place to sleep. The local police station was just down the block so I decided to try that route one more time. The officer at the desk said I could "borrow" a cell for the night. I was getting a little particular about my jail time by now and found this cell to be quite inferior to the one in Kungsbacka. The bed here consisted of a board attached to the wall like a shelf and nobody made a bed up for me. The policeman gave me 2 blankets that I spread over the board and went to sleep. I was awakened at 7:00 the next morning and told to leave. No coffee or "have a nice day", just leave. I told him that I had spent time in better jails than this and I was glad to get out into the fresh air and shout, "Free at last". That was the end of my days behind bars. If you ever hear of me being in jail at some time in the future you will know that I was just looking for a place to sleep.



Brad McInnes
YMASC President 1970 - 1971

