

Amos Branson-Part 5- Mutterings

I set the room phone down and walked to the window of my bungalow; pulling the drapes aside. Not ten seconds passed before I saw two Sheriff's cruisers heading out of town fast, the way you and I had come back in; lights, no sirens. I believe that's called "Code 2."

"Put your clothes on , Martha, we've got company,"

That old saw came out with my breath. An old saying I'd heard as a kid. It never ceased to draw a smile from me. I wonder about the validity and truth of old sayings at times. You know, who and why had cause to utter them and the how is, how did they get repeated enough to be handed down through time. A bar room comes to mind. At least for the off-color ones. Some are excerpts from the Bible. Some are just too old to ever know how they came to be.

At this point I was muttering, mouthing my words under my breath, but I also really wanted to head back out and see what was going on. If the smell that alerted me was what I thought it was then there'll be a lot more emergency vehicles headed out the same way very shortly. For now, I knew, I wasn't going anywhere. I do, however, remember that you have one of those little bars in your room. The ones that sometimes have Canadian Club in them. I knew I needed to talk this through before I did something really stupid.

Going outside, headed, ultimately, your room, I noticed the lack of light and looked up at the sky. Clouds were scudding in. There had been high cirrus earlier but I hadn't taken much notice then. Now, however, they were getting thick and black and the first thing that came to mind was "tornado weather." The midwest is noted for corn and tornadoes and the old answer

to these storms was that they were God's answer to trailer parks. It did seem that way at times but it was also a cruel remark directed toward those less fortunate. The kind of remark born of elite urban dwellers who didn't know which end of a shovel actually made a hole in the dirt.

I was surprised when I saw the maid coming out of your room with a bundle of sheets and towels. "Is he in there?" The question almost was forced out by my surprise.

"No sir, he left in a cab." That stopped me cold. What the... ! Surprise wasn't the operant term here. Shaking, shock, perhaps? I walked quickly to the door and looked in, sure as hell, there were no suitcases or duffle bags in your room. Just the comforter lying on the sculpted green carpet as the maid put new sheets on the bed.

"Are you sure he didn't just go to the lobby or down to the cafe?" Her nod was all I got back. Standing there, mouth open, I had to think. That's when it dawned on me that you had had enough of this. Dumb as a stump I told myself. You weren't cut out for anything remotely like a murder scene; if that's what it was out there. You were a family man and a good friend but, it struck me hard, I should never have thought to get involved in this to the extent I had. Saying I was going back there to sneak around had probably been the straw that broke the camel's back. But, shit, you could have said something. Question is: Would I have listened? Pondering that, I had to say to myself, "Probably not."

Now, you're on your own "buck-o". Nice going moron. Any thought of a "CC and Seven" dissipated like a drop of water in a hot skillet. Ok, what to do?