

MANHUNT

VOLUME 6, NO. 2

Cover Painting by Michael

FEBRUARY, 1958

CONTENTS

FEATURE STORY

- THE PORTRAITS OF EVE *by Bruno Fischer*..... 50

NOVELETTES

- MEET ME IN THE DARK *by Gil Brewer*..... 13
HOOKED *by Robert Turner*..... 33

SHORT STORIES

- BLACK CAT IN THE SNOW *by John D. MacDonald*..... 47
BE A MAN! *by Talmage Powell*..... 29
PRESSURE *by Arnold English*..... 9
THE HELPING HAND *by Avram Davidson*..... 24
THE BABE AND THE BUM *by Mike Brett*..... 62
THE PAINTER *by Michael Zuroy*..... 1
A REAL QUIET GUY *by Tom Phillips*..... 4
YOU CAN'T LOSE *by Laurence Block*..... 43

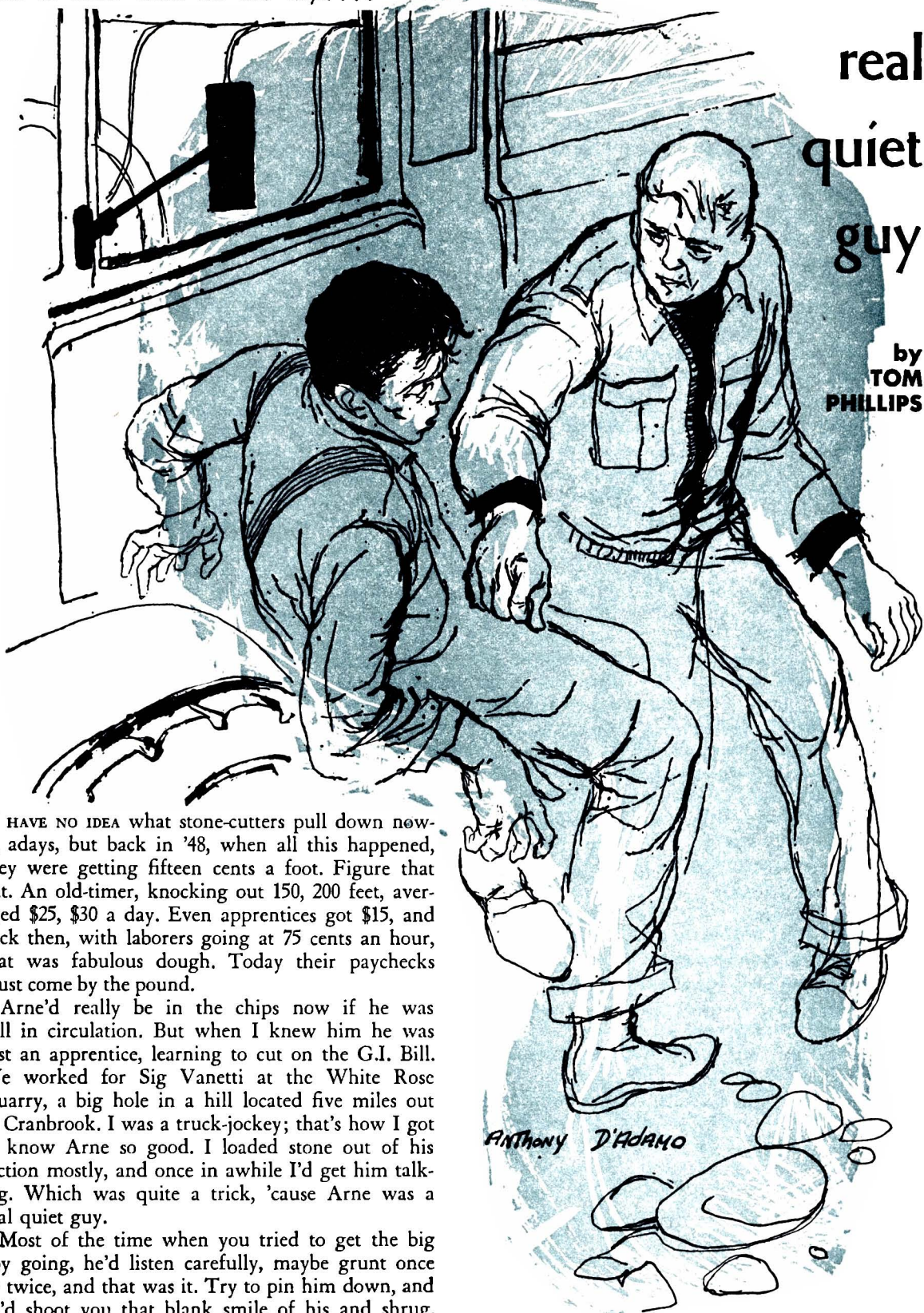
MICHAEL ST. JOHN, *Publisher*
FRANCIS X. LEWIS, *Editorial Director*
CHARLES W. ADAMS, *Art Director* JEFF COOKE, *Managing Editor*
GERALD ADAMS, *Assistant Art Director* JOE SHORE, *Advertising Rep.*

MANHUNT VOLUME 6, NUMBER 2, February, 1958. Single copies 35 cents. Subscriptions, \$4.00 for one year in the United States and Possessions; elsewhere \$5.00 (in U. S. Funds) for one year. Published monthly by Flying Eagle Publications, Inc., 545 Fifth Avenue, New York 17, N. Y. Telephone MU 7-6623. Entered as Second Class matter at the Post Office, New York, N. Y. Additional entry at Concord, N. H. The entire contents of this issue are copyrighted 1957 by Flying Eagle Publications, Inc., under the International Copyright Convention. All rights reserved under Inter-American Copyright Convention. Title registered U. S. Pat. Office. Reproduction or use, without express permission, of editorial or pictorial content in any manner is prohibited. Postage must accompany manuscripts and drawings if return is desired, but no responsibility will be assumed for unsolicited materials. Manuscripts and art work should be sent to Manhunt, 545 Fifth Avenue, New York 17, N. Y. No similarity between any of the names, characters, persons and/or institutions appearing in this magazine and those of any living or dead person or institution is intended and any similarity which may exist is purely coincidental. Printed in U. S. A.

*Arne would be a rich man now—if he hadn't
been so dumb about his new wife. . . .*

a real quiet guy

by
**TOM
PHILLIPS**



I HAVE NO IDEA what stone-cutters pull down nowadays, but back in '48, when all this happened, they were getting fifteen cents a foot. Figure that out. An old-timer, knocking out 150, 200 feet, averaged \$25, \$30 a day. Even apprentices got \$15, and back then, with laborers going at 75 cents an hour, that was fabulous dough. Today their paychecks must come by the pound.

Arne'd really be in the chips now if he was still in circulation. But when I knew him he was just an apprentice, learning to cut on the G.I. Bill. We worked for Sig Vanetti at the White Rose Quarry, a big hole in a hill located five miles out of Cranbrook. I was a truck-jockey; that's how I got to know Arne so good. I loaded stone out of his section mostly, and once in awhile I'd get him talking. Which was quite a trick, 'cause Arne was a real quiet guy.

Most of the time when you tried to get the big boy going, he'd listen carefully, maybe grunt once or twice, and that was it. Try to pin him down, and he'd shoot you that blank smile of his and shrug. Later, when I finally got inside of him, I found Arne was a little on the slow side, and awfully shy.

But nice? They don't come nicer.

He'd quit school at 16, served his stretch in the army, finally drifted into quarry work. Though he never said it, I got the idea he'd got the raw end of things at home. But when he talked about Carol, his wife, he'd smile, and his eyes would light up like a small boy's on Christmas morning. To him she made up for all the things in his life which hadn't turned out just right.

Trouble was, Carol was nothing but a cheap tramp, and everybody knew it. Everybody, that is, except Arne, and he was too dumb to see it. He'd met her at Broadmeadows, which was a crummy bar with a fancy name located a mile out of town where most of the quarry hands hung out. She'd been anybody's playmate for as long as I could remember, even though she was only around 22 years old.

Arne was a bear for wine—muscatel and port—and every night he'd drop in with us, have his usual two, three—sometimes four—glasses. Even when he had a glow on, you couldn't get much out of him. He'd just sit smiling with that empty look on his face. Then one night Carol waltzed over and sat down beside us. "Who's y'r quiet friend?" she asked me.

"None of your damn business," I said, trying to brush her.

"Now, Benny," she mocked. She was plastered to the eyes. "Is that any way to act?"

"Lay off, Carol."

"Drop dead." She turned to Arne. "Hey, mumbles—what's y'r name?"

Arne looked up from his wine, flustered. "Who, me?"

"Yes, you. You got a name haven't you?"

"Yaah, sure," Arne drawled. "Arne. Arne Nelson, I guess."

"You guess? Aren't you sure, dummy?"

"Hey, Garvey," I yelled down the bar to Carol's current steady, "you better come get this broad of yours before I knock her on her fanny!"

"Tha . . . that's all right, Benny," Arne said. "Leave her alone. She's just being friendly. She makes me laugh . . ."

Carol blew up. "I make *you* laugh?" she boiled. "God, now I've heard everything. Why, you sawed off . . ." Then Garvey came up and pulled her away, and not one second too soon. "Didya' hear what that dummy . . . ?" Carol yelled just before Garvey gave her a good clout on the mouth.

After that it became sort of a joke around the quarry—Arne and Carol. Everyone kidded him about his girlfriend, and Arne smiled good-naturedly, and as usual, said nothing. At Broadmeadows Carol went along with the gag and began hanging on him, pretending he was her big flame—all kinds of stuff like that. Talk about pitiful. You should have seen poor Arne trying to trade wise-cracks with her. She treated him something awful, and Arne just took it. Sat there smiling and smiling—

I didn't like it one bit. I could see someone was going to get hurt, and it wasn't going to be Carol. And Arne'd already been hurt enough. I told him repeatedly that Carol was making a sucker of him, but he'd just get sullen. "Don't talk—don't talk," he'd say. I tried protecting him all I could, but after awhile I gave up. I could tell by the look in his eyes—the dope was gone, but good, on Carol.

Then one morning about a month later Arne came to work wearing a smile a yard wide, and told me that he and Carol had been married the night before. A three minute special in Illinois. It seemed like someone had suddenly thrown me into the crusher. That's how sorry I felt for the poor guy. Hate? I would've killed Carol if she'd been there then.

It wasn't hard to figure what had happened. She hadn't married Arne for his good looks, that was certain. The sad mutt was four inches shorter than Carol and ten years older. She'd got herself caught and needed a fall guy. Arne was made to order.

In a way you couldn't really blame Arne for being so blind. Here he was, 33 years old, never having anyone to care about or have care for him, and then all of a sudden—Carol. She wasn't a dog by any means, even with all the mileage she carried. She was a tall, kinda scrawny girl, but built solid at points of stress. Her features were pretty enough, and her flowing blonde hair, falling around her face, made her look almost beautiful. Maybe if my brains were as scrambled as Arne's and I'd had all that sex pushed in *my* face, I'd have made the same mistake.

None of us expected the marriage to change Carol any, nor were we disappointed. It was a well known fact that she didn't suffer for company during the days Arne was at work. Of course when she got all out of shape, and her time was near, she laid off. But a month after the baby was born it was open house all over again.

We all hated her more than ever. That may be strange in a bunch of world-wise, hardened men, but that's just an indication of how we felt about Arne. Whenever she needed the car for the day, she'd drive Arne out, and under any possible pretext, get out, and parade around the quarry's edge, dressed either in shorts or in a tight summer dress which showed her breasts and wagging buttocks off to best advantage. The guys turned their backs on her, or if Arne wasn't around to see, spat. After a few such treatments, she gave up. Even Garvey, whose baby she'd very likely carried, wouldn't speak to her.

On one of those days before she finally gave up exhibiting herself, she caught me at their car. She'd laid the baby, a golden-haired boy, on the front seat, and he was laying there, looking around and gurgling to himself. I was playing with him when she came up.

"Cute kid," I said tersely, embarrassed.

"Think so?" she said, smiling invitingly and pushing her breasts at me. "Arne and I think he's nice."

"Nice? Is that the best you can do?" I felt my anger rising. "Level with me once, Carol. Is this . . ." I pointed at the smiling child. "Is this Arne's?"

She sent me an ugly, smug grin. "What do you think?"

"Is that the only reason you married Arne?"

"You don't think I married the jerk for his charm, do you?" She got into the car, pushed the baby over roughly, arranged herself on the seat, her skirt high above her knees. "Besides," she smirked, "it cuts down on the overhead." With that she gunned the motor and shot down the drive onto the highway.

I stood motionless, watching the car get smaller, my face white, my throat choked with rage and hate.

I don't know why we were concerned over the way things were going with Arne; he certainly wasn't. Blissfully unaware of the overtime his wife was putting in, he seemed happier than ever before. He carried a thick pack of pictures of Carol and the kid in his sweat-stained shirt pocket, and no matter how many times you'd seen them, you had to look again. He was like a boastful kid, so proud of his family. I started avoiding Arne, because every time he started in on how wonderful Carol was, how much he loved her, I'd get a thick feeling in my throat and see red. I knew it was all going to blow up in his face before long.

I remember one night I was out doing the town, I met this creep in a bar, and we started drinking together. You know the kind—dark-haired, with a thin mustache—a real smooth talking cookie. Come to find out later he was an itinerant car salesman, married, with his wife and two kids living upstate. We talked baseball, fishing, even told a few off-color jokes. It was around midnight, as we finished off our sixth or seventh beer, that he mentioned Carol.

"Got a blonde on the string here. Pretty fair looker, and brother! Talk about wild! Wow!" I got a sick, angry feeling in my stomach right away. I knew who he was talking about. "She's married to a dummy who hasn't the slightest idea of how the wind blows. And she ain't one bit particular. When I told Carol . . . that's her name . . . I was moving on, she asked if I had a friend. How about it? Interested in taking seconds?"

I slid off my stool. "Do me a favor, Chuck?"

"Yeah," he said drunkenly, "what is it?"

"Stand up once?"

"Sure." He pulled himself to his feet. "Why?"

I turned swiftly on the ball of my foot, putting my full weight into the blow. There was a squashing smash you could've heard in the men's room as I connected with his mouth, and sent him slamming

to the floor. He lay there amid the cigarette butts and peanut wrappers, shaking his head groggily.

"Hey, Benny . . ." he bubbled through broken teeth.

"What's the big idea?"

"That tramp you're sleeping with. Just happens to be my friend's wife." Then I turned and strode out.

Several days later, I stopped at Arne's table and shot the breeze with him for a few minutes. We were discussing the new clinic he was cutting for, when all of a sudden, just like he usually did, Arne changed the subject. "Say, Benny," he said in that slow way of his. "When you gonna' take the step . . . get married? It's the only way to live. Why since Carol and I . . ."

Things began boiling inside of me right away. *Arne—you poor dumb bastard—I thought. When you gonna' wise up?* "Me married? Hell . . . never happen."

"Honest, Ben, you don't know how happy you'll . . ."

"Christ, Arne!" I choked, turning away. "Cut it out! When you know something about women, then come around. Otherwise, shut up!" I started for the truck.

Arne stood there with a puzzled look on his face. "What do you mean, Ben? What're you getting at?"

"Your wife, you damn fool. She's no good. How long's it gonna' take you to find out?"

"Carol?" he laughed self-consciously. "You don't mean Carol, do you?"

That bewildered, innocent, little-boy voice irritated hell out of me. "Yes, Carol!" I said. "She's givin' it away. She's nothing but a tramp."

Arne was a madman. He charged the truck with a wild, maniacal light in his eyes, and before I could close the door, he'd dragged me from the cab. I never even got my hands up. It felt like he'd hit me with three feet of stone. "Take it back! You can't say those things about my Carol. She's a good wife!" He was just about to bring one of his finishing hammers down on my skull when some of the other cutters pulled him off. It took four of them to hold him until he calmed down.

He writhed wildly when I put my hand on his shoulder. "I'm sorry, Arne," I said, the red heat gone from my brain. "I had no right to say that. Carol's okay. I must've been jealous, that's all. Sorry." As I got into my truck and drove off, I heard Arne muttering incoherently, "Jealous of me, that's what you are . . . jealous . . ."

Shortly after our fight Hank Schmitt quit and Vanetti hired a new guy to drive his truck. Matt Carter was his name and he was a wise-acre kid. Even though he was only twenty-three, there wasn't anything he didn't know about trucks. Anyway, that's what he thought.

He didn't hit it off too well with any of the old gang. For two reasons: First off Vanetti took to Matt in a big way. If the kid was obnoxious to the

rest of us, he sure knew how to get around the boss. Sometimes, watching him butter up Vanetti, snowing him, asking his opinions on everything from baseball to politics, it would be enough to turn your stomach. He sure knew how to handle Sig.

Little by little I found myself being eased out of the best jobs; the long, cushy runs were going to Matt, while I got the short deliveries, mostly local stuff. All bull work. Several times he even asked Vanetti for my new International. You know how that turned out. You don't send the beat up trucks on long hauls.

Another thing. He got onto Carol in a big hurry. Though she'd all but given up on us guys, she still came out on rare occasions. One of those times Matt saw her, she saw him, and they were in business. Matt knew the story, and it wasn't long before he was taking quite a few afternoons off to see the doctor, attend funerals and stuff like that. Of course Sig Vanetti couldn't see what Carter was pulling. That's how buffaloeed he was. The rest of us kept our traps shut, just waiting, each of us hating Carter all the more.

A month later everything blew sky-high. About one o'clock on that fateful Thursday afternoon, Arne had an accident. A pile of stone he'd stacked on his table somehow tipped and cut his left hand pretty bad. Old man Vanetti bandaged him up the best he could, then sent him into town to the doc's. As he watched Arne slowly drive off, Vanetti, not knowing what he was saying, remarked, "God, I sure hope Carol's alone today. Pity the guy Arne catches in bed with her."

"Pity, hell!" I muttered vengefully. "No matter what Arne does, they both got it coming . . ." Fred Sawyer, standing beside me, nodding grimly, indicated the kid's empty truck. Carter had taken the afternoon off again.

Carol's winning streak was snapped this time, because Arne quietly let himself in the back door just as she and Matt were bedding down. What came out of the trial was pretty mixed up. Afterwards Arne just wasn't there anymore. He sounded like a little kid—babbling, babbling—saying nothing. The second day it was all over, and Arne was committed to Lakeview.

Arne might never have known if he hadn't gone to the kitchen to get some aspirins. He noticed a cigarette butt in the sink, one which Carter had hurriedly tossed when Carol gave him the "ready or not." Whatever else Carol did, she didn't smoke. Neither did Arne.

"What's the matter, honey?" Carol called thinly from the bedroom, shagging into her clothes as fast as she could. "Why are you home so early?"

"Hurt my hand," he said, entering the bedroom. "What are you doing in bed?"

"I didn't feel so hot. Was taking a nap. I was just getting up when you came . . ."

Why the dope didn't fall for her act this time, I'll never know. I imagine he must have brooded a lot about what I'd called Carol that time, and somewhere in that muddled head of his a doubt had grown. Now the strange butt, and then the bed routine.

"You were fine this morning," he said slowly, his eyes narrowing in suspicion.

"It came on sudden-like, baby," Carol simpered, kissing him, trying to sidetrack him.

It almost worked. Angrily he broke away, began to prowls the room. Carol's eyes widened in fear.

He found Carter in the closet, scared silly, holding his clothes in a tight ball against his naked chest. The sap never had a chance. Stone-cutters with weak arms and wrists just don't last. And Arne was getting to be one of the best. The fingers of his good hand were like steel talons as he dug them into Carter's throat. Carol whined in her throat, tore at Arne's arms, as he beat the man's head savagely against the wall. When Carter fell senseless to the floor, Arne turned on Carol. With one fierce cut, he silenced her.

When they came to, they were in the garage, bound and gagged, both nude, Carter at one end, Carol at the other. I can imagine how Carol must have shrieked into her gag. She knew it was almost the end of the line.

Maybe you don't know what a blasting cap is. Dynamite, contrary to popular belief, doesn't just explode by itself. You have to set it off with another explosion. That's where blasting caps come in. They're everyday equipment at a quarry, and everybody treats them with respect. An accident with one of them could easily blow off your arm. You can see where Arne picked them up.

Arne didn't say much—just hustled around the garage stringing his wires carefully. He watched interestedly as Carter came around, smiled at the frenzied terror that came over his victim's face when he saw the wires hanging out of his mouth, felt the tight tape which wouldn't allow him to spit the hard metal object from his mouth. Perhaps he wondered at the fact that Arne's car was half-way into the garage, its hood up.

"Just like the Fourth of July, Carol," Arne mumbled as he deliberately attached long wires to the ones dangling from Carter's mouth. "Boom!" When Arne approached her with similar wires, she strained insanely against the ropes, nearly gagging on the cap in her mouth, sweat suddenly bathing her distorted face, her naked body. Her eyes pleaded with him, but he paid no heed as he carefully spliced the wires in place, giving the cap a playful tug against her teeth, hurting her. No trace of reason remained in his smile now.

Laboriously he dragged Carter to the extreme corner of the garage, the wire going taut. Carol's eyes bulged almost out of her head as Arne walked to the car, and after a moment's fidgeting, touched

the wire ends to the terminals of the car battery. There was a muffled explosion. Large, thick drops of blood splashed on her body.

In raging fear and hysteria she pushed with all her strength against the garage wall, managing to throw herself flat on the floor. She was rolling on her stomach, screaming dully in her throat, when Arne picked her up and carried her back to what used to look like Carter—

Blood and pulp were all over the garage walls and ceiling. Arne's car was thoroughly splattered, I know because I was one of the first ones there. Returning from a city delivery, I purposely drove past Arne's house to see if anything had happened. When I saw the people running toward the garage, I stopped and ran too.

It was a sickening sight to see. On the edges of my consciousness I heard a woman screaming uncontrollably. A man bolted from the garage gag-

ging. I could only stand it for a minute myself. Where there had once been an attractive woman—only shredded, torn flesh—

Then I got out of there. Fast. As I shagged back to the truck, fighting my stomach, I remember feeling no regrets—only satisfaction, like a weight had been lifted off my back. Carol was finally repaid for the time she dumped me for Garvey.

And Carter? Why did he have to blab so much? Why had he bothered me this morning, telling me about his date with Carol? He wouldn't be looking at my International with those scheming, greedy eyes of his anymore—

Poor dumb Arne. All the time he'd been cutting. Didn't he have sense enough to see that someone had been fooling with the stack of stone on his bench during noon hour—that no matter which piece he took the whole thing was going to come down—?

