

Chapter 8: A Golf Club

Carl was stopped at the red light in his 1967 blue Chevy that he had worked on and “souped” up.

His girlfriend, Ana, was sitting in the passenger seat beside him.

The clouds coming up over the mountains were dark and it looked like it was soon going to rain.

She never got used to the “suicide” clutch that Carl had installed in the car. It would quickly engage and the car would leap forward.

They were stopped at a light, where he put it from second gear into first as the car sat idling on the hot pavement.

Finally the light turned green.

He let the clutch go, and off they went.

The next light turned red as he raced up to it, and he had to slam on the brakes.

“Shit, these lights aren’t timed right.”

He slammed his foot down on the brake, but this time he put the car in neutral.

“What did you say?” she asked.

“These lights, they don’t seem to be timed right.”

The light was still red, and Carl was looking over now at Ana. He loved spending time with her whenever possible.

Carl didn't see the man in the car next to him open his car door, grab a golf club from the back of his pickup, and walk quickly over to the driver's door of the Chevy, opening it.

Carl had been leaning against the door and fell out onto the hot Arizona pavement.

The man hit Carl first in the back of the head and then in the face twice with the golf club.

The blood began puddling up on his neck, but the stranger just kept hitting him with the five iron over and over on his stomach.

He then ran back over to his truck, tossed the bloody club in the back of the truck, and drove off.

Carl didn't move at first. Ana managed to get out of the car and walk over to where her bloody boyfriend was lying down and moaning.

He wasn't unconscious, but he wasn't responding to Ana's touch on his shoulder that she shook.

"Carl, wake up, we need to get you to an emergency room."

He came to, and slowly moved onto his side. It was the only thing that wasn't hurting.

He managed to pull himself into the back seat of his car, with Ana doing her best to help.

The blood from the gashes in his face was dripping onto the upholstery in the car.

Ana, panting from the effort, closed the door and hopped into the driver's seat.

She put the car into first gear, and kept her foot down on the clutch as best that she could.

She tried to let the clutch out slowly, but couldn't stop it from popping out, and the car leapt forward.

Carl nearly passed out again from the intense pain.

Luckily, the hospital was only a couple of miles away, and Ana managed to get them there quickly, not even bothering to look around for any cops.

She pulled into the handicap spot of the hospital parking lot and shut the car off.

Ana climbed out as quickly as she could and hurried into the emergency room.

“Can anyone here help me? My boyfriend is in really bad shape and is in the back of our car. He has been severely beaten with a golf club.”

A doctor started walking out the front door, calling out to a nurse who followed him.

They both saw Carl in the back seat and called out for another nurse.

They all managed to get him into a wheelchair, into the hospital, and then onto a gurney after getting some more help.

“Jesus, what happened to him?”

“We were parked at a light and some man just grabbed him out of our car and started beating him over and over with a golf club,” Ana said.

They wheeled him into an empty room and asked Ana to wait out in the emergency room and immediately started “working” on him.

Ana had never seen the man before that beat up her husband, although she didn’t get a very good look at him.

Carl had grown up in the poor and rough side of Tucson, and he learned how to fight “dirty” when he was young.

She was in the waiting room when a doctor called out her name, and she got up as quickly as she could.

“We need to keep him a couple of nights here in the hospital to monitor him and make sure he is okay before he can leave the hospital.”

“Can I go in and see him,” she asked.

“Yes, of course you can.”

When Ana got to his room she walked in quietly to see if he was resting.

He looked really bad, especially his swollen face with stitches.

“Honey, I am here,” she said.

Carl immediately opened his eyes and did his best to smile.

“I am not feeling any pain right now, but I heard I look pretty bad.”

“Yes, did you know who beat you up? I had never seen this guy before.”

“No idea, I didn’t get much of a look at him, just felt the club as he beat the shit out of me.”

“Well, you have to stay in here for a couple of nights, but your mom is on her way over.”

“I will drive your car back to your mom’s place since you won’t be able to drive for days it sounds like.”

“I called her and she is on her way over now to see you,” she said.

Margaret arrived, and joined them in the room. Ana gave her a brief hug and then left to drive the car to the house.

Margaret just looked at her son without saying anything for the longest time.

“Carl, I just don’t understand why you have to fight so much. Look what has happened to you.”

“Mom, you know that dad taught me how to fight and trouble just seems to find me.”

“Son, I think you do plenty to find trouble if you ask me.”

“That seems true, but it has nothing to do with me being beat up so badly.”

“Then what happened?”

“Mom, I don’t know. I was just sitting in the car at a red light and the next thing I knew I was laying on the asphalt and someone was beating me with a golf club.”

“Surely you did something to provoke him?”

“No, I promise, I have never seen him before.”

With that she just sat there until Carl shut his eyes and drifted off into sleep.

Chapter 16: Fishing trip

There were a couple other times that Oto flew back to Tucson to spend some time alone with his dad.

On one of those trips, they decided to drive up into the desert mountains and go fishing at a lake that was a few hours away.

“Son, how many times have you gone fishing?”

“Hmm, well I have only gone a few times, but I’m really looking forward to this trip so you can teach me how to fish.”

They were about halfway on their way to the lake when the Datsun truck started heating up. The engine was hot and Carl had to pull off on the side of the road.

“Damn, we have to let the engine cool a bit, and then I will check the radiator. I brought along extra water in case this happened.”

Since they had been driving up the small mountain it wasn’t as hot as it could have been.

Finally, Carl used a rag and opened up the cap on the radiator and it started hissing and steam came out.

“Son-of-a-bitch, that is hot,” he said.

Luckily the steam died down and he filled the radiator up with water and then put the cap back on tight.

He then started the truck back up and the engine wasn’t too hot anymore, so they continued on their way and eventually arrived at the campground.

Given how late it was, they decided to go fishing early the next morning, so they needed to get some sleep.

Instead of pitching a tent, Carl unrolled some sleeping bags and already had the small mattress ready, so they could just sleep in the back of the truck.

For Oto it was a magical night. The stars were out and so bright.

They both just stared up at the night sky and wished on shooting stars and his dad showed Oto where the big and little dippers were and some other constellations.

It didn’t take long for them both to fall asleep, but first Carl set the little alarm clock that he had brought along, making sure they would be awake at 5 a.m.

Oto woke up when the alarm went off and they both packed up their sleeping bags, eating a quick breakfast of some hard-boiled eggs and coffee.

Actually, Oto didn't drink the coffee, but instead drank down some of the apple juice that they had packed.

The sun would soon be up, so Carl took the tackle box and both fishing poles and he headed down to the dock where they would rent a boat.

Oto was so excited, because he had never rowed a boat on a lake before.

They were soon pushing off from the dock and Carl showed his son how to row out to the middle of the large lake.

"Son, we brought some worms that we will try. This first time, I will put it on the hook for you, but then after that you can do it."

Oto wasn't thrilled to watch how the wiggling worm was impaled on the barbed hook.

His dad showed him how to cast out far away from the boat and watch the sinker that was then bobbing on the surface of the glass-like lake.

He reeled the line back in and then let Oto practice casting on his own.

Oto was slowly reeling in the line when he felt something tug and his pole dipped down in the water.

“Yank it up, son! I think you have one on the line!”

Oto did as he was told and then fought to bring the line up.

After what felt like ten minutes, Oto could see the medium-sized trout right below the surface.

His dad put out a net and pulled the kicking fish into the boat.

Oto was a bit nervous to see the fish trying to jump out of the boat, but he did as he was instructed to do and held the fish as his dad took the hook out of the mouth.

“Congratulations, son. This is a great catch. It is big enough for us to keep, and we can cook it later for dinner. Nice job!!”

Unfortunately the line with the empty hook got snagged on Oto’s shirt and then the barbed hook went into his palm.

“Dad, help me!”

“Hold on Oto, give me your hand for a second.”

He managed to get the hook out of his son’s hand, but the small gash began to bleed instantly.

Oto fought back the tears that were beginning to well up in his eyes, watching the blood drip down off his hand into the rocking boat.

His dad grabbed a rag from his front pocket and wrapped it around his son's hand.

"Don't worry, son, it doesn't look too bad, just hold this rag on the wound and you should be able to get back to fishing in no time."

"Dad, it hurts. I think I will just take a break on the fishing for a little bit, but why don't you keep fishing."

"Of course, son, and I am sorry about your hand. I think you will soon be feeling better."

The fish was still jumping around, but Carl grabbed him and put the fish on the metal fish stringer and put the trout, captive, in the water near the boat.

"Dad, what is that?"

"Oh, so this way we have the fish clipped on by its gills and can then just keep it in the water alive in the water next to our boat. We should be able to catch some more and then cook them up for dinner."

"Dad, we do have other food, in case we don't catch any more fish?"

"Of course, we have sandwiches later for lunch, and then for dinner we have a pot of beans, some garlic bread, and hopefully some fried trout!"

Oto began feeling better, but loved just watching his dad cast out his line and reel it back in.

It was a long time before anything happened, but then his dad's line dipped in the water and he watched as his dad reeled in an even bigger trout.

This time Carl was extra careful with the hook, and he got the second fish on the metal fish stringer.

Oto asked his dad to put one more worm on his own hook and began casting again.

It wasn't too long before Oto got another bite, but when he reeled his line back in the worm was gone and no fish attached.

"Don't worry, son, we have two good fish that we can cook up tonight. Let's just row out a bit more and relax in the boat. I have some cold beers that I will drink, but I brought you some water."

Oto rowed them way out into the middle of the lake and then he drank water as his dad drank beers.

They both just relaxed and let the boat drift around in the warm morning sun.

It was a magical time. Not quite as exciting as the Disneyland trip they once took, but Oto felt so good spending some time with his dad.

"Dad, why didn't Alice join us?"

“Oh, I thought I told you, she wanted to give us some time alone, and she had a lot of work to do. You know her alignment shop is super busy right now. She works so hard now that it is her business and all.”

“Dad, tell me about your wedding to Alice, I never have heard anything about it.”

“Well, we drove from Tucson to Phoenix and got married at the courthouse. We didn’t want to have a big expensive wedding. We both had our friends join us as witnesses and then we all went out to our favorite mexican food restaurant after driving back to Tucson.”

“Dad, didn’t you go on a honeymoon?”

“You know, we had planned on doing that, like maybe going to Hawaii, but then we both got really busy with my shop and her business. But we plan to go there someday.”

It was getting a little too hot now out in the boat, so Oto let his dad row them back into the shore near their camp.

It didn’t take long before they were back, and Oto and his dad pulled the boat onto the rocky “beach.”

“Come here, Oto, I will show you how to gut and clean the fish that I caught, and then you can do the same for yours.”

“Dad, I am not sure about that. Let me watch you to see how you do that.”

Carl pulled in the fish stringer and then walked with the two kicking trout over to a rock out on the shore away from their camp.

“Okay, so see how I grab the fish really tight and then take him off the stringer.”

Oto watched the fish kick around but his dad held the fish down and picked up a small hammer that he had brought with him. He placed the trout down on a rock, using the hammer to hit the fish right near the brain and it immediately went limp.

“See son, now I take my sharp pocket knife and insert the blade here at the bottom, and pull it, not too deep – don’t want to cut the guts – up to the gills here and then pull them all out. Then there is the bloodline we scrape out so it won’t taste muddy when we cook it tonight.”

“Dad, if you hit the fish with the hammer, I think I can gut my trout like you did.”

Once the fish was dead, Oto did what his dad had showed him to do, and before long they had them both wrapped up in paper towels and on ice in an old small ice chest that he had brought along.

For the rest of the day they hung out in the back of the truck on the mattress, since it was parked in the shade.

After they woke up from brief naps, they went and did some hiking in the nearby forest.

Oto would always look back on this small trip as one of the best times he could remember being alone with his dad, who didn't drink that much beer.

That night they cooked up the trout, with the pot of beans his dad had promised and the fried trout and toast.

"Dad, thank you so much, this was the best trip, ever."

"Yes son, I agree with you there."

We better clean things up and get to sleep, because in the morning we need to get on the road and drive back to Tucson before it gets too hot."