

Way out at sea, born of wind, water, currents and the Coriolis effect, a special wave gets born. Not just any wave but one very different than the waves nearby. The law of uniformity in wave height and distance are ignored. It moves swifter than others and tears into the waves in front absorbing their energy and becoming bigger. It is angry and gets angrier. It travels alone and seeks the rocks and shoals of seashores to dissipate its energy. It has a single mission, to obliterate itself when it reaches land.

The shore life depends on the constant movement of the tides, but such a wave impacts the weakest of animal and plant life with devastating and lethal consequences. Nothing can stop it, not a ship or an oil rig. Many ocean scientists described it as a myth, but countless tales of the destructive effect of a rogue wave have been told and recorded. At sea, whole ships have been surprised by such a wave over 100 feet tall appearing suddenly and without warning limiting ship crews time to close hatches and portals. Now 30 miles off shore from the Big Sur coast, the energy of a rouge wave, influenced by the continental shelf, forces the inherent mass of the wave upward. This wave was now 10 feet tall and rushing toward the Big Sur coast.

Something in Bill's peripheral vision raised the hair on the back of his neck. He turned his eyes to the ocean and froze. An ominous grey wall of water was rushing toward them. He felt the adrenaline rushing through his veins. He quickly turned toward Jodi. She was transfixed. He stood up, grabbed her hand and pulled her up. He looked up and down the beach. With the bluff behind them, there was no place to run. They were trapped. Realizing they were doomed, Bill wrapped his arms around Jodi. Jodi looked into Bill's eyes. She understood that they were going to die. They passionately kissed goodbye.

The wave crested above them and broke with a thundering clap. The weight of the water slammed them down and knocked the wind out of Bill. He reached out, grabbed Jodi's hand and pulled her toward him. Bill held Jodi's hand tight. He didn't want to lose her. The wave was relentless with intent to separate their hold. The wave was using its deadly weapon, a ton of water per cubic meter to drive Bill and Jodi into the very rock they so cherished. The wave succeeded. The force of hitting the rock broke Bill's grip on Jodi. Bill became a maliciously tossed piece of flotsam thrown into a churning whirlpool of debris. For a split second, he surfaced and was able to catch his breath, only to be sucked down into the swirling current and slammed on the rock again. With his strength gone, he realized he was finished and wanted to have an image of Jodi in his mind when he died. In a rapid fashion, he saw an image of their first date, their marriage, their home, their last kiss and hearing a song. Accepting his demise, he stopped fighting and surrendered to the churning water.

With the wave's forward energy dissipated, the water began to return to the sea. First, it started receding slowly, then picked up speed. With the wave's mission accomplished, the sea was beckoning the wave to return. Or rather, demanding. Anything that was in the wave's path was now being pulled to the ocean with increasing speed. It was as if the mission of the rouge wave was to clean up after and erase any proof of the deadly damage it delivered.

Bill was getting dragged out to sea along with the flotsam and debris. His body slid into a large rock embedded in the sand. As his vision faded, he felt a painful sensation on his back. He started coughing violently and opened his eyes. He is lying on the beach with the rock pressing into the small of his back.

From the wave cresting, washing on the beach, and returning to the sea, the whole tragic event took less than 20 seconds. It was now calm again.

Bill got up slowly and limped along the shoreline looking for Jodi. He noticed there was other people yelling for loved ones or attending bloodied people lying on the beach. He yelled out at the top of his lungs. "Jodi, Jodi, where are you?"

He looked up the beach. He looked down the beach. He looked out to sea.

Jodi was gone.

With the adrenaline wearing off, Bill dropped to his knees, sat back, crossed his legs and put his hands on his face. He felt the blood oozing from the cuts on his elbows, knees, shoulders and head. He placed his hands on his ears and looked down at the wet sand. The aluminum package and Jodi's hat was nearby. He began to shiver. He didn't care.

Thirty minutes later, EMTs were attending to survivors on the beach. After attending to Bill's injuries, an EMT placed a aluminum solar blanket on Bill and put his hand under Bill's arm to help him stand and said, "Let's get you out of here. This is not a safe place."