



**COLD
WATER,
HOT
BLOOD**

DAVID REYNOLDS

Cold Water, Hot Blood

© 2017 by David B. Reynolds.

Disclaimers:

- This is a work of fiction. Any resemblance to any persons or events is strictly coincidental.
- This eBook is licensed for your personal enjoyment only. It may not be resold or given away to other people. Thank-you for respecting the hard work of the author.
- No part of this book may be reproduced or used in any manner without the express written permission of the author except for the use of brief quotations in a book review.
- This book is intended for mature audiences only. It contains graphic descriptions of sex and violence.

Cold Water, Hot Blood

Chapter One

“Where can I find and photograph the ultimate wave?” Dan Berger asked a co-worker an instant before the answer flashed in his mind at the same it was answered: “Point Lobos.”

Putting answer into action was simply a matter of getting up well before dawn, hopping in his compact sedan and beating the surfers south from San Jose. Instead of continuing in to the beachside resort of Santa Cruz, he sped a little further down the coast past Monterrey towards the scenic Big Sur coastline.

Sandy, a co-worker who was also a fellow photographer, told Dan, “The perfect spot for what you have in mind is a narrow channel between the mainland and Bird Island.” That comment resonated with Dan, which was why he was raring to go so early on an early fall Saturday morning.

Hiking through the predawn light, Dan’s goal was simple in practice, tough in execution: catch a wave breaking just as the first rays of the fall sun started penetrating the water with their soft light. With a small camera bag slung over his shoulder and a digital Nikon in one hand, Dan walked a few feet before a glance at the sky told him he needed to move it or lose his shot. Picking up his feet, Dan was in running racing form and at full speed within minutes.

“Marathons are interesting, especially along the Northern California coast, but I like a little more speed,” he once told Sandy who asked about his preference for shorter races. “Besides, I can keep up my 5-6 minute mile pace for maybe 15 miles, but not 26.2. I’d rather watch the scenery and go a little slower than try and actually win the race.”

Arriving at a low cliff overlooking the channel, Dan glanced over his shoulder before looking out at the waves being compressed by the narrow gap. Estimating the sun’s height and how much time was left before the light would be perfect, he guessed he had about two minutes to get down near the water. Clicking his favorite zoom lens into place and shoving the camera into a soft waterproof housing, Dan placed his bag, wallet and cellphone at the base a tree inside a plastic trash bag.

Scurrying down a muddy slope and onto damp rocks he guessed were covered at high tide, Dan pointed his camera as waves came from both directions down the narrow

channel, smashing together. “Now this is cool,” he said aloud, referring to both the beauty and, as the water soaked through his thin polo shirt and cargo shorts, the temperature.

His eyes moving this direction and that, Dan shot what he wanted in a matter of minutes using the soft bag to protect his gear while giving him full access to his camera controls. Less than ten minutes after arriving at his rock, Dan saw the light was already too harsh for what he planned.

With his main photos on the tiny electronic data storage card, Dan started climbing back toward his bag. As he reached the top of the bank, he glanced out at the open ocean to the south. His eyes went wide and his mouth dropped open in shock at what he was seeing, though his hands were busy stripping off the camera strap from around his neck.

“What are you doing, you moron?” Dan yelled from his vantage point a few feet above the waves. All thoughts of photography vanished as he saw a small sailboat rapidly approaching from the south. It was less than quarter mile away from what Dan knew was a disaster in the making.

Dan saw waves driven from the south smash into water funneled from the north down the narrow gap between Bird Island and the mainland. Having just seen the force of the waves, he knew the channel was a maelstrom of spinning water, powerful currents and hidden rocks. Any boat entering that channel from either direction was looking at a wreck, he saw.

“Go back,” Dan yelled, waving and jumping up and down to get the attention of the youngish man at the wheel. He took one hand off and waved back at Dan before continuing on his course. “Unless this guy is best sailor on the planet, and his boat has some huge engines backing up a few square feet of canvas, I am looking at a wreck in the making,” Dan muttered.

An earlier trip to Monterey had shown Dan many similar sailboats whose tiny little engines were barely powerful enough to get them parked into their slips. Anyone who said these dinky put-put engines could handle the currents, especially the rip tides, at Pt. Lobos was smoking some whacky tobacky, he knew.

The worst part in Dan's eyes was the boat making a beeline for the gap he had just photographed. Dan's body was already in motion, running back down the slope and waving his arms. "Look at me you fucking idiot," he yelled at the top of his lungs.

What the man at the wheel—Dan could see his tall, slight build, SF Giants ball cap and thick sunglasses easily—didn't see was an abnormally large wave heading straight at him. Dan yelled but even though it seemed like the boat was more than fifty yards from shore, likely distracted by his companion, a stunning blonde in a yellow one-piece bathing suit.

The blonde saw Dan, smiled and waved. Her companion—a small black dog—barked.

"I could just let them die ... but I like dogs too much," he said as some act of insanity grabbed him by the ears and took control of his brain when the toes of his running shoes touched the water and he launched himself into the ocean.

Unless I do something, everyone on that boat is doomed, raced through Dan's head in the instant between launching himself off the rocks and landing in the icy water. The cold water acted like a slap in the face as he changed from distance runner to open water swimmer.

He was already in motion and more than halfway to the boat before the big wave he'd spotted plowed into the boat. Guessing the wave was about six feet tall from the back, or twelve feet tall on the face, Dan watched in horror as the water cascaded onto and over the port bow (the front left) with enough force to rip the wheel out of the man's hands and send the sailboat heading away from him and toward the rocky Bird Island shore.

Now fighting not only the current and riptides that threatened to smash him on the rocks, but broken pieces of sailboat carried by another wave from behind, Dan took a deep breath. His arms moved overhead as rapidly as he could spin them while his churning legs and pointed feet pushed him ever closer toward the wreck. He heard a "crunch" as bottom planking shattered on a jagged rock while he swam but his eyes and mind were only on getting to the boat.

Dan didn't know what happened to either the man, woman or dog, unable to see with the water in his eyes.

Another wave from behind swooped Dan and propelled him toward the back left side of the boat as he body surfed more than swam. Spotting a slight lull between waves, he used its height to snag a rail and jump onto the deck.

Looking at the deck beneath his feet Dan began mentally counting off the seconds before the next wave arrived. Clambering aboard, Dan spotted the frightened, barking dog as it ran down a short flight of stairs ending at a closed door. He noticed the man behind the wheel and woman sunbathing were gone.

As soon as his feet touched the deck, he heard frantic pounding and high-pitched feminine screaming coming from the other side of the door where the dog had gone. "Forget the dog," Dan's brain was telling him: "rescue the woman on the other side."

Water coming in over the side was pressing against the door, keeping it tightly closed. There was already at least two foot of heavy seawater on his side. Dan pulled on the door but it was held tightly closed by the water and a doorframe badly warped by the crash.

His eyes began scanning, looking for a tool," he could use to pry open the door. A small piece of steel and wood came floating down the stairs, answering his silent mental call. He yelled, "Stand back" and drove the metal with all his might into the door.

The thin railing bent like a wet noodle. "Shit!" he screamed.

"Help, help me, please," the woman on the other side of the door cried.

Dan glanced around and saw a laptop lying on a table covered by a few inches of water. Dan grabbed it intending to use it as a wedge when he noticed a small flash drive shoved into a USB port. Seeing the drive would get in his way if he tried to use the computer the way he wanted, he shoved the tiny piece of plastic into a pocket of his cargo shorts before using the laptop as a battering ram. As he worked, he was serenaded by the barking dog at his feet and screams from the trapped woman on the other side.

Pounding was useless and after kicking it with his running shoes, he saw that was less than useless.

"Get back from the door," Dan yelled at the woman.

Still not seeing any tools, and noticing the water against the door was getting higher, much higher, the only tools handy were those attached to him: his hands and his fists. Yelling, "fuck it" as loud as he could, Dan hauled back and punched the wooden door as

hard as he could with his right, non-writing hand. Part of his brain knew smashing his fist into a door was going to hurt like hell but he needed to make a hole and do it right now.

His blow splintered the door above and inside the door handle just as his arm exploded in agony.

“Help me open this door,” he screamed to the woman inside. We’ve only got seconds to get you off this wreck before Davy Jones adds us to his collection.” As splinters tore into his good hand, Dan pulled at the wood, enlarging the hole snapping off pieces of wood while glancing at the sight of an attractive, though bleeding, woman’s face.

This time Dan’s kick with a bare foot—he had no idea when or how he lost his shoe—was enough to widen the hole. She saw what he was doing and joined him in pulling at the door.

The woman on the other side was wearing a bikini and flimsy wrap. While not a knockout, she was still worth looking at, a small part of him noticed. “Give me your hand,” Dan yelled just as the boat continued rocking back and forth.

Another wave slammed into the boat. It was even more powerful than the first big one and sent Dan flying backwards, his head slamming hard into a step as water kept pouring down below decks. Dan was stunned briefly until a mouth full of seawater snapped him back to the here and now, letting him see the water on both sides of the door was high enough for him to force it partway open with his shoulder.

The woman was trying to work her way through the gap between the door and its frame, but it was tight. Raising his head up to get a mouth full of air, Dan ducked underwater, planted his feet and pulled the door handle with all his might using the one arm that worked. With the pressure now close to even, Dan’s effort was just enough for the door to pop open and allow the woman to burst past him.

In her effort to escape, she slammed hard into the stairs, stunning her.

Seeing water inside the boat almost level with the upper deck, Dan got behind her. He put his good hand on her butt and shoved, hard, trying to move her faster up the stairs. Dan was running out of air when she popped out to the surface, followed instantly by him as he gasped for breath.

Not willing to wait another second, Dan took a half step back and ran into the woman from behind with his shoulders, ramming into her backside and sending her over the side.

Still on board the rapidly sinking collection of splinters once known as a sailboat, Dan spotted the small jet black dog. It was cowering in fear, trapped on the deck in a coil of rope and downed sail. The dog's mouth and nose were not underwater ... yet. Using his bad hand, Dan willed his fingers to lock down on the dog's collar and pull the pooch to his chest. He turned his back to the ocean and jumped off the boat not caring what he hit.

Watching briefly as the wreckage moved further out into the Pacific, Dan turned and looked for shore.

"How in the hell am I going to get to land and what act of insanity caused me to do this?" he asked himself while his eyes scanned the surface. He saw the woman, dog and himself were caught in the grip of a strong rip current threatening to sweep them out to sea. They were already out of sight of Bird Island, he saw while inside the trough between two waves.

"We need to get to shore, and fast," he yelled, hoping the woman could hear him. The problem is the "shore" wasn't a long, sandy beach but sharp rocks, tall cliffs. If he, the woman and the dog were very lucky and able to get there, they would be fortunate to find a gap between the imposing, rocks coated with mussels and their razor-sharp edges.

Dan glanced nearby and saw Miss Bikini. She was disoriented but close so he immediately began kicking his way over to her. "Grab my shoulders and hold on tight," Dan yelled to her, trying to be heard over the noise of the surf. She reached for his neck and one of her knees smacked him hard in the ribs by way of response.

The impact caused Dan to swallow even more water as a jolt of pain told him that rib was probably broken.

"Grab my shoulders or my shorts, not my neck," Dan repeated back at her so she could hear him once he was able to force the water down and get some air into his lungs. "We're alive and if you want to stay that way very much longer, you need to do exactly as I say. Now move it," he yelled.

He felt her fingernails scrape his skin as they grasped his belt and latched onto his shorts while Dan kicked and did a modified breaststroke with his legs and one working arm, angling them toward the shore.

A tiny part of his befuddled brain acted like it was watching a video in high school. “The way to get out of a rip current is to swim parallel to the shore. If you fight it, the current will exhaust you and take you out into deeper water,” the man on the screen inside his head said calmly.

An accidental swipe with sharp fingernails on his back pulled Dan out of his daze and back to reality.

Out of the corner of his eye—“My vision is very blurry and I don’t know where this red haze came from,”—Dan spotted what he was hoping for: a small gap between two rocks. Still holding on to the dog as the woman floated behind him while gripping his shorts, Dan got them positioned almost perfectly for the next wave to come off the raging Pacific and push them toward land.

Close counted this time, though the wave shoved his hurt ribs into another rock—hard—but it also pushed them through the dinky space toward one more set of rocks. Dan acted as a bumper for his passenger as they were forced onward, the powerful wave slamming his chest into the unyielding rock.

“I’m going to find out the hard way what is on the other side,” the miniscule part of his brain not concentrating on survival said. “I don’t care if it’s just more rocks, but if fortune is smiling on fools like me, I hope its sand.”

Dan was barely able to use one of his feet—the red haze in his vision was getting deeper and beginning to turn black at the edges while his body seemed to have a will of its own—to push off one last rock and send them angling toward a tiny beach.

With the force of the ocean moving through the narrow funnel, pushing the woman behind him into him, he saw yet another rock, this one with an edge looking suspiciously like a gigantic steak knife poised to filet him.

A slight turn let him avoid most of the rock though part of it scraped down his lower leg as he was able to get out one last kick.

Seconds later, Dan landed, face first on the blessed sand, his passenger’s weight sending his face into it, threatening to cut off his air. “Oh great, I escape drowning only to suffocate on sand,” he said.

Able to lift his face up and grab a deep breath of fresh, salty sea air, the dog escaped his grasp, got up, wobbled, threw up on him before licking the lady’s face.

She rolled over to one side, got up on her hands and knees and moved forward, turning at the last minute to look at Dan. He couldn't tell what she saw, "Martian, maybe, by her color," he guessed. She copied her dog ... and barfed seawater and everything else in her stomach in Dan's face.

Somehow, from some deep recess, he found the energy to push himself a few more inches up the gritty, rock-covered sand. Now it was his turn to roll onto his side and get rid of a few gallons of salty water, sand, mud and who knows what else he had sucked down.

The three of them, two humans and a dog, just lay there for what seemed like an eternity but probably wasn't more than a few seconds. The miniscule part of his brain that was still functioning was more than happy just to be breathing.

Dan was having problems seeing because something kept getting in his eyes. Dan wiped his forehead and it came away bloody. "Ah fuck," he muttered, cursing aloud. A small part of his baffled, addled brain remembered that head wounds bleed a lot but generally aren't serious.

Still pretty well out of it, Dan managed to get a good look at the lady whose life almost cost him his. He saw she had long brown hair, which was thoroughly tangled and matted with seaweed of course. She also had a great pair of tits, which were now completely exposed.

Dan guessed he smiled because she glanced down, realized her top must have gotten knocked off in the water, and saw he was staring at her bare chest. She brought her hands up to cover herself.

Now it was her turn to smile. "After what you just did, giving you a good view of my boobs is the least I can do," she was able to croak before her eyes moved to Dan's bloody face and another wave of nausea washed through her.

"Shirt," Dan croaked, his mouth now dry and feeling like it was full of sand. Dan motioned for her to grab the remains of his polo shirt and pull it over his head. Dan leaned forward and she did, stopping when the cloth hit his dangling right hand. The second that cloth hit, Dan let out a blood curdling scream.

"Oh my God," she shouted, Dan's scream waking her up. "You're hurt."

Dan motioned for her to continue taking the shirt off him, which she did. She grabbed the torn, bloody piece of fabric and as quickly as she could—not nearly fast enough for Dan—got it off him and slipped it over her fair skin, his one open eye saw.

“I guess technically she is no longer naked. Practically? Well, that’s a different story since depending on how she moves I can see at least one nipple,” he may have said as darkness closed in on him.

The woman spotted the dog standing near by. “Tinkerbelle, give the man a kiss. After all he saved both of us.” She picked the dog up and brought it close to Dan. Tinkerbelle should have been named Piranha after her jaws chomped down on his bad hand’s thumb. That entire arm from the elbow down to his hand was by now solid searing agony. His entire world was pain and it was consuming him, causing him to nearly black out.

“Think moron,” he said. “Concentrate. Block out the pain. What works? One arm and at least a little bit, both legs? Next, get your legs under you and get moving. If I don’t get help soon, I’m going to freeze in this cold water. I need to get us the hell out of here.”

“Bad girl, bad girl,” the woman was repeating, scolding her dog.

Dan used his good arm push himself to his knees. He started to stand when the world began spinning. The lady, whose name Dan still didn’t know, wrapped her arm around his waist. Unfortunately she grabbed his broken ribs in the process, causing him to do his best coyote impression and howl in pain.

Before they could move, a voice called out from the rocks and bushes above them.

“Who’s down there?” a woman’s quavering voice asked.

The bushes parted and a young couple, maybe in their early to mid-20s, started staring down. Dan was sure both humans were a sight.

“Me,” he tried to say.

“He’s hurt,” the woman yelled, trying hard to support Dan while the other two people saw a man covered in blood with cuts covering his chest and legs. One arm was dangling at an unnatural angle. The woman up the bank stared at Dan ... and fainted. She was lucky in that her boyfriend was close enough to catch her before that woman added to the casualty count. He laid her to one side and looked back down again at the two shipwrecked humans and one dog.

“I was in a sailboat that got smashed on the rocks up the coast from here,” Dan heard his new friend say. “Call 911, quick.”

With his girlfriend out of commission, resting to one side, the young man and the woman Dan rescued in turn rescued him ... after the man pulled out his cellphone and punched in the emergency number, calling for help he vaguely heard.

The man bent down and kissed his girlfriend, waking her, Dan saw. Her eyes glanced again at Dan and she threw up. “Nah, nah, you missed me. Score one for me,” Dan tried to say, not knowing or caring if anyone heard him.

With the dog nipping at their heels, the other three people carried him up some slick rocks and a short steep sandy path to an overlook along Highway 1. The kid was wiry but strong, taking Dan by the shoulders while each woman had a leg. A white convertible Ford Mustang was parked off the road.

The kid got his girlfriend into the car, giving her a bottle of water while Dan lay in the sun, his back against the warm metal. Dan was doing his best to stay conscious. He wasn't sure if he was thinking or talking but he tried to say he was beginning to go into shock, which wasn't surprising given the amount of pain he was in and the blood lost from the combination of cuts punctures.

It wasn't long before sirens could be heard racing down the road toward them. A paramedic vehicle slid to a stop, spraying them with gravel. *Hey, what're a few more bruises among friends?* He thought.

Dan tried to talk but his brain and tongue weren't connected. What came out sounded like, “Ga boa. Two pupple. O-hay?”

Once Dan spoke, the adult lady wearing his shredded shirt had a sea change in her demeanor. It vanished into the bright sunshine. You could almost see the light bulb in her head come on. “Richard. Richard and Sofia. Oh god, oh god, I hope they're OK,” she told the paramedics.

“Who are Richard and Sofia?” a female paramedic asked, her attention on the demolition derby wreck masquerading as a man in front of her.

“I was on this sailboat with my brother and his girlfriend,” she explained. “I went down to fix them a snack in the galley. I barely managed to start making it when all hell broke loose. Richard must not have wanted to go out around that little island, Bird Island,

I think it's called. He probably thought he could use the engine and motor through the gap.”

She turned and looked frantically at the other people standing nearby, some of whom were attending to Dan. “Are you getting more help for them? Please?” she cried, knocking a paramedic's hands away as she tried to dress the woman's own wounds.

The second paramedic, a man who the small slit of Dan's one opened eye looked like he did stand-in duty for a stone wall or maybe played football as an offensive line—not one man, the entire line—was on his radio. He turned and smiled.

“You can relax,” the giant said. “They were found shaken up, cold and with a few bumps and bruises on Sandy Beach.”

Dan's passenger on the ocean took the paramedic's hand and pumped it up and down in both of hers. “Thank-you, thank-you, thank-you,” she cried, a big smile on her face as tears of joy poured down her cheeks.

The male paramedic turned and looked at Dan. “You on the other hand, look like something my cat dragged out because it was too disgusting to eat,” he said.

The second paramedic, the woman, came back with a collapsed gurney. With one EMT taking his shoulders and the other his ankles, they loaded him on to it and slipped him into the back of their ambulance. Dan could vaguely see someone getting a syringe ready to add to his collection of holes courtesy of splinters from the boat's door, the rocks, mussels and other sharp objects.

An old lyric, “How many holes does it take to fill the Albert Hall?” passed through his mind. Dan tried to sit up, but the woman—“one of these years she is going to tell me her name, razzerrazz it,” Dan managed to mutter—leaned over. Dan was able to whisper something in her ear while a needle pierced one of the few places on his body not already torn to shreds—a butt cheek—just before a wave of darkness began rolling over him.

“What was that about?” the male paramedic asked.

“He asked that we find his camera gear that was near where my boat went down,” the woman told the paramedics. That was the last Dan sound heard.

Read The Rest

If you liked the first chapter of *Cold Water, Hot Blood*, download the rest. This novel is [now available for Kindle](#).

About the Author

David B. Reynolds lives in California where many of his stories are set. A former weekly newspaper reporter and editor, he now works as a Certified Technical Writer.

In addition to spending much of his free time writing, the author is a frequent reader of action and science-fiction novels and short stories. Many of his stories pay homage to extraordinary works he read in the past.

If you enjoyed *Cold Water, Hot Blood*, please leave a review on Reynolds' Amazon.com page. You can also download (in PDF format only) free sample first chapters—and some complete stories—at <https://storiesbydavereyn.wordpress.com>. Non-fiction blog posts on ways to improve corporate and interpersonal communication are available at: <https://wordsbydavereyn.wordpress.com>.