

BILL FACES SUNDAY MORNING ALONE

He rubbed his eyes.

He woke up hung over from a whole bunch of beer and figured a good breakfast would set him right. Some fried eggs, pot of coffee, a couple of English muffins.

He rubbed his eyes again.

He'd cracked an egg and it slithered away.

It came out of the eggshell and it slithered away.

Something green and wet came out of the eggshell and slithered away.

The words amphibian and reptile came to mind.

Whatever it was it had sizzled when it hit the pan, let out a little scream, and slithered into hiding over the top of the stove and back behind it.

He looked at the rest of the eggs in the carton.

He rubbed his eyes again and thought, maybe just an English muffin and coffee today.

A little something in the coffee, maybe.

BABY SHOWER

He walked down the concrete steps to the beach. He had coffee in a paper cup and a newspaper. It was a little after 7 PM, late August, hot and muggy.

"You'll have to leave by 6:30. The shower's at 7:00," his wife had said.

"O.K."

It was Cheryl's baby shower. Cheryl was their oldest daughter. It would be their first grandchild.

"Gotta get out of the house and let the women 'oo' and 'ah' over the baby clothes, swap baby stories, give baby advice," he'd said. He really didn't mind. It was fine, just fine.

It was hot, late summer humid. "Tropical air from Mexico," the weatherman said. He took a seat on the bottom step and took the plastic lid off of his coffee. He looked toward the water where a pair of strollers was wading in the surf.

To the north of him was a bluff covered with weeds and cactus and construction signs that foretold the "Exclusive

Beach Community" soon to come. To the south were the older beach houses.

A breeze blew off of the ocean. It was cool, nice. He sipped his coffee.

To his left was a surfer and his girlfriend. They were sitting on his surfboard. He was still wet and she sat very close with her arm around his neck.

In front of him and a little off to the right, two young girls sat on large, colorful beach towels, deep in conversation, giggling occasionally. They were about 19 or 20, plump and large legged, heavy breasted, not the lithe brown, blond, regular California beach types, but very pretty.

He set his coffee on the step next to him and opened his paper. Front page, editorials, sports, comics. He liked a good newspaper. He wondered how some people could get all their news from the T.V.

He read for about 20 minutes, until it began to get too dark. He put the paper on the step and took the last drink of his coffee. He stretched and looked around. The beach was deserted. The surfer and his girlfriend were gone. "Probably somewhere making love," he thought. And the strollers were gone too, "probably driving home, or in some fast food restaurant," he thought. He could see the two plump girls down in the water, taking a twilight swim.

He looked out at the water and watched the girls jump over waves, screaming, breasts bouncing. He thought they looked very beautiful. It looked like the prettier one had something in her hand. He looked closer. The other girl had something in her hand too. The beach wasn't very wide, they were fairly close to him. Close enough to see that they had taken their bathing suits off. That's what they had in their hands, their suits, all crumpled up.

He felt a stirring. He lit a cigarette and watched. They were screaming, laughing every time a wave hit them. A couple of surfers walked by on the beach and up the steps without even looking toward the girls.

A large breaker came in and knocked them both down. They sprawled laughing in the shallow water.

"OH MY GOD," the prettier one screamed, "I LOST MY BATHING SUIT."

They got up and went through the motions of trying to find

it. It was getting darker now, he could only see their silhouettes. They got knocked down by another large wave.

They ran up the beach laughing and gasping, the one who had lost her bathing suit leading the way. Their towels were only about 15 feet from him. The one who hadn't lost her suit didn't bother to put hers on. They bent over to pick up the towels. They both started drying their hair. The prettier one saw him.

"OH MY GOD, KIM, LOOK, AN OLD MAN."

"OH MY GOD."

They picked up their towels and pressed them to their chests, then picked up their sandals. He thought they were very beautiful. They ran toward the steps still covering themselves inefficiently with the towels.

"God, I don't believe it," Kim said. The prettier one giggled.

"How was the water?" he asked as they passed him.

"Great, great," they laughed, "you should try it."

They were ten steps up from him now and starting to wrap the towels around themselves. The prettier one dropped hers and had to bend over to pick it up. He had turned to watch.

"No, I didn't bring my bathing suit," he said.

They laughed and kept running, getting the towels arranged before they got to the top of the stairs.

He reached down and pulled at the crotch of his pants, giving it more room so it could straighten out.

He felt sad. He wondered if the shower was over.

Probably not.

He considered a coffee shop, or perhaps a bar.

FOOTBALL

She's not in the book any more. She might be selling drugs out of a small house in Hayward and he wouldn't know.