

Beach Campout – How to Kick Your Friend in the Head and Get Away with It

After my junior year at Stanford University, I took a 6-month internship with a company in Thousand Oaks, CA. During that summer, I got married and Sandra and I moved to Camarillo, CA. One day we decided to go camping. A friend of mine, from the east coast, who I met at my summer internship also wanted to come. The three of us left after work on Friday for a weekend in the outdoors. I wanted to hike into the wilderness to camp and found a nature preserve right across the street from the coast. We arrived at the base of the preserve (it was in the hills) after work and started our hike in. The nature trail was well marked, and we had the place all to ourselves. As we passed the trailhead, I noticed a sign that read “Rattlesnake Preserve...” and some other information about how you will go to jail for killing snakes here. Hmm, ok...I didn't mention that to Sandra. The trail quickly narrowed to a single file. The first omen on our ill-fated adventure was the “stick” lying across the narrow path. As Sandra stepped over it, the “stick” quickly moved off the path and began rattling. Sandra freaked out, and before I could say anything, my friend quickly grabbed a small boulder and smashed the rattlesnake. Great, I thought, we are all going to jail. I explained to everyone we were in a rattlesnake preserve and it was illegal to kill snakes here. My friend said “no worries” as he picked up the dead snake, twirled it in large circles like a lasso, and then let it fly into the deep ravine next to the trail. Unfortunately, as the dead snake reached the apex of the arc from the toss it tangled on a high overhanging branch. So there we were, in a rattlesnake preserve with a dead rattlesnake hanging from the highest branch for all to see. Obviously, we could no longer camp there. As we made our retreat, the sun went down and suddenly all we heard were rattles from rattlesnakes all around us. It seemed they were like vampires waiting for sunset before descending upon us. We ran all the way back to the car. Once safely in the parking lot we considered our camping options and noticed the beach right across the street. We decided to camp on the beach for the night. As I setup my small two-person dome tent, I noticed my friend did not have a tent. I asked him where he planned to sleep as he was eyeing the honeymoon tent. When I told him he was not invited into our tent, he decided to sleep in the open air in his sleeping bag. We bedded down for the night, Sandra and I in our tent and my friend somewhere outside. I awoke sometime in the middle of the night to the sound of a ferocious wind blowing in from the ocean. The strong winds had flattened the top of our dome tent to just a few inches from our faces. Sandra thought we were going to be blown away and told me to go outside and secure the tent. Half asleep, I emerged from the tent wearing only my swimsuit and instantly got sand blasted all over. It was very dark and I was being plummeted by a sand storm when I noticed some rocks embedded in the sand. I picked up a few and placed them by the tent base, as if that was going to hold down anything. Then I noticed a larger rock close by, when I went to pick it up it was lodged into the sand. I started kicking it very hard to loosen it. After a real hard kick, the rock started to move on its own. As I strained in the darkness to see better, the rock started moaning. I finally realized I had been kicking my sleeping friend in the head. I quickly retreated into the darkness and returned to our tent. The windstorm passed. As we packed up in the morning, my friend complained about his head. Must have slept in the wrong place last night I said as we prepared to leave.