

**ACTIVITY:** Swimming

**CASE:** GSAF 1951.01.21 / SA-0102

**DATE:** Sunday January 21, 1951

**LOCATION:** The attack took place in the Indian Ocean at the Native Bathing Beach, 3,5 kilometres [2.2 miles] north of the entrance to Durban Harbour, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa.

9°50'S, 31°02,2'E

**NAME:** Hendrie Nkwazi

**DESCRIPTION:** The swimmer was a 19-year-old black male, a labourer.

### BACKGROUND

**WEATHER:** Durban meteorological station recorded temperatures from 19° to 28°C. [66° to 82.4°F]. On the previous day 0,1 millimetres of rain had fallen, and the same amount fell again on the day of the accident. At 08h00 there was just 1/8 cloud cover and a moderate 16-knot south-westerly breeze; at 1400 there was still 1/8 cloud cover and a fresh 18-knot southerly breeze.

**MOON PHASE:** Full Moon, January 23, 1951

**SEA CONDITIONS:** The sea was described as “real pea-soup water”; it was muddy flood water. The incident occurred 70 minutes after mean high tide.

**ENVIRONMENT:** An earth tremor had been felt on the Natal South Coast at 06h25. Skiboat anglers off nearby Country Club Beach were catching barracouta and a marlin was landed, while bay anglers were landing grunter and salmon up to 12 kilograms.

**DISTANCE FROM SHORE:** 75 metres

**DEPTH OF WATER AT ATTACK SITE:** One metre

**TIME:** 16h25

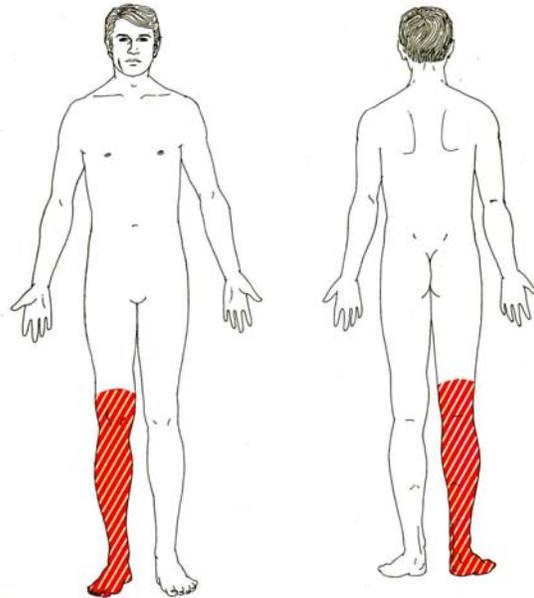
**NARRATIVE:** About 200 black bathers were in the water but Nkwazi and two companions were separated from the crowd. The three men were swimming when Nkwazi suddenly screamed. Professional life-savers went to help him, but by the time they brought him ashore he was dead.

**INJURY:** Fatal. The Inquest report, dated January 22, 1951, states that the swimmer’s “death was due to an extensive wound to the right thigh with the loss of the greater portion of the lower limb caused by a shark bite.”

**SPECIES RESPONSIBLE:** Not identified

**SOURCES:** Natal Mercury, January 22, 1951; Rand Daily Mail, March 8, 1952; Neville Gracie

**NOTE:** In January 1951, Mr. Neville C. Gracie, Honorary General Secretary of the Surf Lifesaving Association of South Africa, presented a reprint from the November 1950 edition



of the Medical Journal of Australia to the Durban City Council. In this report the methods and successes of the meshing programme off Sydney's beaches were recorded. After considering the report, the Council decided to use offshore nets.

**CASE INVESTIGATOR:** Marie Levine,

