

ACTIVITY: Free diving

CASE: GSAF 1960.01.16

DATE: Saturday January 16, 1960

LOCATION: The attack took place just below Roseville Bridge, opposite Killarney picnic grounds (later the site of Ted Bromley Training Centre), in the upper reaches of Middle Harbor, Sydney, New South Wales, Australia. 33°55'S, 151°10'E.

NAME: Ken William Murray

DESCRIPTION: He was a 13-year-old male, an excellent swimmer and lived with his parents in Forestville on the far side of Middle Harbor.



Ken Murray

BACKGROUND

WEATHER: The air was hot and still.

MOON PHASE: Full Moon, January 14, 1960

SEA CONDITIONS: The water was oily-smooth, warm and murky.

DISTANCE FROM SHORE: 10 to 15 feet from the river bank.

DEPTH OF WATER AT INCIDENT SITE: Four feet

TIME: 15h30

NARRATIVE: Theo Watts Brown, then a diver with the Northern Territory Police on leave that Christmas, was visiting his parents in Sydney. Brown took Ken and 16-year-old Gary Hopkins, who lived next door to the Murrays, to skin dive as practice for using scuba the next day. The boys splashed around in the water for about an hour. Hopkins left the water and Brown joined Ken, swimming several hundred yards out into mid-stream and back to the beach. Brown left the water while Ken continued to practice diving skills. Just moments later as Brown was drying off he saw Ken surface with his face mask hanging near his chin, and called "What's the matter, Ken?" The boy didn't answer, kept treading water and gasped. Then Brown saw the water redden around the boy. Brown dived into the water and brought the boy to the shore.

INJURY: Fatal. Murray's right leg was severed above the knee.

FIRST AID: Brown applied pressure to the wound with a towel and managed to control the bleeding. A fisherman and his two sons were fishing around the point and Hopkins called to them. They brought their dinghy to the beach, Brown carried Ken into the small boat and continued to apply pressure to the wound on the way back to the boatshed. Ken was carried on a stretcher up the steep track from the boatshed to an ambulance and transported to Royal North Shore Hospital in Sydney.

TREATMENT: At the hospital, Murray's leg was surgically amputated. Initially, he appeared to rally, but in the early hours of Monday morning and went into respiratory arrest as result of a fat embolism that lodged in the brain. He was resuscitated and placed on a ventilator, but died nine days after he was bitten by the shark.

SPECIES INVOLVED: The shark was seven to eight feet in length. Although no species identification was made at the time of the incident, Edwards believes a bull shark was involved.

NOTE: This incident changed Theo Brown's life and he became obsessed with finding out what motivated a shark to attack a human., eventually setting up a research station on Rangiorara Atoll to test his hypotheses on responses of sharks to sonic stimuli. Brown went on to author at least two books: *Sharks*, *The Search for a Repellent* and the title below.

SOURCES: Canberra Times, January 26, 1960; Theo W. Brown, *Sharks, The Silent Savages*, pages 1 to 6; H. David Baldrige, page 196; Alan Sharpe, pages 76-77; Hugh Edwards, pages 100 & 108.



Theo Brown, tagging a shark.

SHARK VICTIM DIES

SYDNEY, Monday: Shark victim Ken William Murray died to-day in Royal North Shore Hospital.

Doctors fought for nine days to save the 13-year-old boy, who was mauled by a shark while spear fishing in Middle Harbour last Saturday week.

Murray, of Arthur Street, Forestville, died in the respirator into which doctors had placed him a week ago.

His parents had kept a constant vigil at the hospital.

The boy did not regain consciousness after collapsing last Monday.

Following the shark's attack, Murray's right leg was amputated.

Mrs. Murray to-day expressed thanks to all those who had prayed for her son over the past week.

"Ken was a very fine boy, and we had great hopes for him," she said.

A doctor at the hospital said to-day that the boy had remained unconscious and did not feel pain.

The hospital switchboard had been swamped with inquiries about his condition. Letters came from all over Australia and one message was received from an 11-year-old boy in New York.