

**ACTIVITY:** Free diving

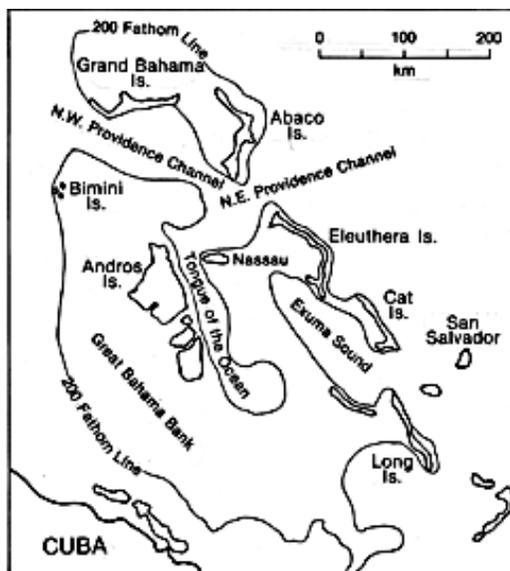
**CASE:** [GSAF 1981.08.07](#)

**DATE:** August 7, 1981

**LOCATION:** The incident took place at Gingerbread Reef on the northern edge of the Great Bahama Bank, halfway between the Biminis and Grant Bahama Island, Bahamas. 26°00'N

**NAME:** Sir Robert Marx

**DESCRIPTION:** The diver, a 53-year-old male, is 6'1" and weighs 220 pounds. He was wearing a bathing suit, white T-shirt, black face mask and blue swim fins. An experienced diver, he is nautical archeologist and author of numerous books on shipwrecks.



**SUPPORT BOAT:** A 20-foot white-hulled sailing yacht.

#### **BACKGROUND**

**WEATHER:** It was a clear, cloudless day and the air temperature was about 85°F.

**SEA CONDITIONS:** The sea was calm and clear with 200-foot underwater visibility. No channel was present.

**ENVIRONMENT:** Flat, sandy bottom with reefs in the area.

**DISTANCE FROM SHORE:** 40 miles

**DISTANCE FROM BOAT:** 100 to 150 feet

**DEPTH OF WATER AT INCIDENT SITE:** 25 feet

**TIME:** 12h00

**NARRATIVE:** Marx had been in the water for about an hour and was alone in the water.. I was on the surface, snorkeling, searching for a shipwreck. I spotted the shark when it was about 200 feet away and charging straight at me with great speed. The shark slammed into my chest and I lost my mask and snorkel. The shark kept coming back, making fast, tight circles and repeatedly attempting to bite me. I don't know how many times this occurred. The shark finally gave up after biting my arm. The shark swam away and I swam to the boat."

**INJURY:** The diver's right upper arm was severely bitten.

**FIRST AID:** On board the boat, Marx used a dive belt (weight belt without weights) to stop the bleeding. He was taken to Bimini, arriving there six hours after the incident.

**TREATMENT:** Marx was treated by a paramedic at a clinic in Bimini where his wound was repaired with 258 stitches and two teeth were recovered.

**SPECIES INVOLVED:** The incident involved a mako shark about 12 feet in length. Two teeth were retrieved from his arm and were subsequently identified by Dr. Eugenie Clark as teeth of a mako shark.

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# Increase in shark attacks this year

By DAVID CHANDLER  
Associated Press Writer

MIAMI (AP) - The cry "Shark!" is being heard with alarmingly increasing frequency in the waters off Florida and the Bahamas these days, leaving experts and experienced divers puzzled by the spate of attacks.

"Some weirdo stuff is happening," Bob Marx, a 25-year-veteran diver, said Tuesday as he recuperated at his Sateelite Beach home from an attack by a 12-foot mako shark. He was attacked Aug. 7 while skin diving east of Little Isaac Bank in the Bahamas.

"I've never seen anything like it," he said. "I've spent my life in the water, and this sort of aggressiveness never happens... it's like a magic potion is in the water and the sharks are freaking out."

Marx's was the third shark attack reported in the Bahamas this year.

Seven other swimmers or surfers have been struck off Florida, including 19-year-old Christina Wapniarski, who was killed when a shark tore apart her leg after a catamaran she and three others had been sailing capsized Aug. 11 off Daytona Beach.

In a normal year, marine experts say, two or three shark attacks are recorded in Florida and two in the Bahamas.

At the University of Miami, leading shark researcher Dr. Samuel Gruber said he had no explanation for the increased attacks.

"I don't have any theories, except maybe that the reporting is getting better. For some reason there is a relatively high increase in the incidence of attacks," Gruber said. "I expect two attacks a year in Daytona, two a year in the Bahamas; occasionally someone gets bitten in the Keys."

"We're working with sharks every day — tagging and tracking. I haven't seen anything different, nothing unusual except that there seem to be a lot of shark attacks."

Marx, 44, had taken a crew of eight divers to the Bahamas to scout wreck sites and locations for a

movie. He was carrying a spear, but not a speargun, because the divers had been forced to jab away unusually curious sharks and barracuda.

He then saw the mako bearing down on him about 100 feet away. As he held the spear in both hands, the shark struck, bending the quarter-inch steel shaft like a horseshoe and ripping it from his hands.

"The first time it hit me it didn't bite," Marx said. "It knocked me out of the water. It hit so hard that it knocked off my mask, fins and snorkel."

"I grabbed its snout with my right hand and started pounding on its head with my left. It was pushing me backwards very fast. Then it somehow got hold of my right arm between the armpit and the elbow."

"When I felt those teeth going in, I pulled my arm away so hard it left two of the shark's teeth in the wound."

Marx brought both knees up violently into the shark's belly, spun away and curled in a ball.

"I really thought I had had it. I remember thinking about all those articles and lectures in which I'd said sharks were harmless cowards," he

said. "I've had a lot of scrapes in my life, but nothing is as terrifying as a mako coming at you." The shark broke off the attack, and Marx was taken ashore to Bimini, where doctors needed 150 stitches to close his wounds.

According to the National Underwater Accident Data Center and other sources, the Florida attacks this year occurred at:

—Elliot Key, south of Miami, where a spear fisherman was struck on the arm by a lemon shark last month.

—Marathon in the Florida Keys, where Monroe County sheriff's detective and Navy diver Mike Barber was bitten in the face by a small nurse shark 10 days ago.

—Riviera Beach, north of West Palm Beach, where two young men were injured in separate attacks in late March.

—Juno Beach, just north of Riviera Beach, where a 15-year-old surfer was bitten in the leg Feb. 2.

—Jacksonville, where a professional diver was bitten in the face and had his mask torn off March 30.

## Money missing: Answer may lie with amnesia victim

Jan. 7, 1979 through June 30, 1980 — the period covered by the audit.

"We don't know that any money is missing," said a Ferguson aide.

The auditor's report did not claim illegal acts, nor did it make a finding for the recovery of the money.

It also said "inadequacies of financial record-keeping in the cashier's department made it impossible to pursue the differences (in account balances) further."

Meanwhile, state Treasurer Gertrude Donahoy and members of her staff recalled how Ms. Boerger

COLUMBUS, Ohio (AP) — Ohio is looking for \$1.3 million in unaccounted-for money and the one person who might solve the mystery apparently has amnesia and can't help.

The story of Jane Boerger, 48, former head of the cashier's department in the state treasurer's office, unfolded Tuesday following the release of a state auditor's report.

State Auditor Thomas Ferguson said the report showed there was a \$1.3 million discrepancy between the amount shown by the cashier's office as its checking account balance and the amount listed in bank records.

