

ACTIVITY: Surfing

CASE: GSAF 1985.05.26

DATE: Sunday May 26, 1985

LOCATION: The incident took place in the Pacific Ocean just southeast of Long Beach, California, USA.

33°44.3'N, 118°06.5'W

NAME: Robert Rodriguez

DESCRIPTION: He was a 30-year-old male.

BACKGROUND

WEATHER: The sky was overcast, and the air temperature was 24°C.

MOON PHASE: Waxing Crescent, 39% of the Moon's visible disk was illuminated. New Moon, May 20, 1985.

SEA CONDITIONS: The sea was calm and the water temperature was 16°C.

DISTANCE FROM SHORE: 50 metres, and 100 metres south of the Seal Beach Pier.

DEPTH OF WATER: Two to four fathoms

TIME: 11h00

NARRATIVE: Robert Rodriguez had been in the water for 15 minutes. He was lying prone on his board when he observed a small patch of white water three metres from the front edge of his surfboard. Suddenly his board began rising in the rear as it came to a complete stop. Rodriguez tried to shift his weight to the rear of the board to keep the nose of the board from being pulled underwater. The board was pulled out from under the surfer as he slid off the middle left side of the board and spilled into the sea head-first. Rodriguez went one to two metres under the waves as he felt a "cramping" in his thigh. He surfaced, located his board, remounted it and headed toward the beach.

INJURY: Rodriguez sustained a single deep laceration to the front of his left leg, just above the knee. It is not possible to determine what caused this injury. The cause of the boiling in front of his board might have been a seal, a shark, or perhaps just tidal currents.

FIRST AID: When the surfer reached the beach, a lifeguard was summoned to assist with first aid. Then the surfer was transported to Woodruff Community Hospital in Long Beach.

SPECIES: It is not possible to determine what caused this injury. The cause of the boiling in front of his board might have been a seal, a shark, or perhaps just tidal currents. Unfortunately, the source of the "boiling" was not observed, and the surfer's injury did not demonstrate conclusively what might have caused it. Interviews with local lifeguards determined that there were no known submerged objects in or near the surfer's location. It is not possible to determine what, if any, marine animal had come into contact with Rodriguez.

CASE INVESTIGATOR: Ralph Collier

