ACTIVITY: Surfing  
CASE: GSAF 1987.08.15  
DATE: Saturday August 15, 1987  
LOCATION: The incident took place in the Pacific Ocean off Tunitas Creek, near Half Moon Bay, San Mateo County, California, USA.  
37º21.5'N, 122º24.5'W

NAME: Craig Rogers  
DESCRIPTION: He is a 40-year-old male.  
SURFBOARD: His surfboard is 2.1 metres in length, square-tailed, and colored white with numerous decals.

BACKGROUND  
WEATHER: The sky was overcast and the air temperature was 18ºC.  
MOON PHASE: Waning Gibbous, 59% of the Moon's visible disk was illuminated. New Moon, August 24, 1987.

SEA CONDITIONS: The water temperature was about 15ºC. The sea was murky; underwater visibility was about a metre.  
ENVIRONMENT: The sea floor was sandy. No marine mammals had been observed in the area before, and none were seen afterwards.

DISTANCE FROM SHORE: 200 metres  
DEPTH OF WATER: Three to four fathoms.

TIME: 07h30

NARRATIVE: Craig Rogers had been surfing only five minutes and was sitting on his board, legs dangling off either side. His hands were on each rail just in front of his legs as he gazed out toward the horizon. Roger's surfing companion, Tim Burraston, was 200 metres south of him. Rogers had been perched on his slowly rolling surfboard for several minutes when he noticed that his board had suddenly, almost unnoticeably, stopped moving in the water. Without moving his head, he lowered his eyes, coming to focus on the head and eye of a "huge" shark. The shark had gently grasped the surfboard, just millimetres in front of his hands. Rogers thought he and the shark remained frozen, almost motionless, for several seconds. They both seemed to release their respective grips simultaneously, with the little and ring fingers of Rogers’ left hand striking the protruding teeth of the shark’s upper jaw.

After releasing his grip, Rogers slid off the right rear of his board and grabbed the edge with both hands. With only his head protruding above the water, he watched as the shark repurchased its jaws and held the board firmly in its mouth for several seconds before finally releasing its hold and submerging.

As soon as the shark relinquished its grip, the surfer climbed back on his board. As water swirled around him, Rogers watched the shark submerge and swim beneath his board. Straining to be heard above the roaring surf, he yelled to his friend that a shark had

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attacked him. It was several seconds before Burraston realized what had happened. Rogers caught a wave and held on until his board “bottomed out” in the surf.

**INJURY:** The surfer sustained superficial lacerations to his hand.

**DAMAGE TO SURFBOARD:** The impression by the shark’s teeth were easily identifiable by their spacing, and shark also left two teeth embedded n the surfboard. The surfboard, with accompanying teeth, is currently in a surfing museum in Santa Cruz.

**FIRST AID / TREATMENT:** Rogers and Burraston drove to Emerge-Care Medical Clinic in Santa Cruz. Dr. Stanley Hajduk treated the surfer’s wounds, which required seven sutures. The wounds were cleaned and dressed and antibiotics were prescribed. The surfer is expected to recover without any permanent impairment.

**SPECIES:** The incident involved a white shark, 5.7 metres in length.

**CASE INVESTIGATOR:** Ralph Collier

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