

ACTIVITY: Spearfishing

CASE: GSAF 1993.10.26 / SA-406

DATE: Sunday September 26, 1993

LOCATION: The incident took place in the Indian Ocean at Danger Point, on the northern or Klein Baai side, Western Cape Province, South Africa.



NAME: Wimpie Bouwer

DESCRIPTION: The diver, a 36-year-old male, is 1,8 metres tall and weighs 89 kilograms. He wore a black five-millimetre wetsuit. His mask was black, fins were black and grey. He carried a black 1,4-metre Champion rubber-powered speargun were black, and towed an orange float. He wore no jewelry and had no injuries prior to the incident.

BOAT: The support boat was a 15-ft white-hulled ski-boat.

BACKGROUND

WEATHER: The sky was partly overcast, air temperature was 16°C, and there was fresh 20-knot north-westerly breeze.

MOON PHASE: First Quarter, September 22, 1993. Full Moon, September 30, 1993

SEA CONDITIONS: The sea was greenish, choppy, and there was a north to south current. Water temperature was estimated to be 15°C, and visibility was four metres.

ENVIRONMENT: Although there was fishing activity in the vicinity, the diver had not speared any fish.

DISTANCE FROM SHORE: Two kilometres

DISTANCE FROM BOAT: 30 metres

DEPTH: 16 metres

TIME: 11h30

NARRATIVE: Wimpie Bouwer was resting on the surface, facing seawards, when he felt a turbulence in the water below. "Then the shark hit me with such force that I was bumped completely out of the water," he said. "My right arm was still clasping my speargun and was sort of hooked behind the shark's head. I was flung to the left, and the shark passed to the right and then disappeared."

The diver, unaware that he had been bitten by the shark, began swimming for the boat. Within moments he was picked up by the support boat. "Once I was on board I realized that I had been bitten, and we immediately picked up Tommy Kruger, the other diver in the water. There was no sign of the shark."

INJURY: The shark made a single bite, lacerating the diver's left knee and calf. No tissue was removed.

EQUIPMENT DAMAGE: Unknown.

FIRST AID/TREATMENT: The divers, Tommy Kruger, Andries Smit and DeWet Ries, made

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Bouwer lie down and they used direct pressure on the wounds to control blood loss. Kruger took charge of the boat, while Smit and Ries tended the diver. They raced back to Kleinbaai harbour where three doctors came to their aid. Then Bouwer was taken to Hermanus Hospital by Kruger and Smit, while Ries stayed with the boat. At the hospital the wounds were sutured by Dr Christo Barnard. No tooth fragments were recovered.

SPECIES INVOLVED: According to the diver, the incident involved a white shark four metres in length. He believes the attack was due to mistaken identity.

CASE INVESTIGATOR: Andrew Gifford, Shark Research Institute-South Africa



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