

ACTIVITY: Waterskiing

CASE: GSAF 1994.01.09

DATE: Sunday January 9, 1994

LOCATION: The incident took place in the Brisbane River at Karana Downs Reach, about 70 kilometres upstream from the mouth of the river, Queensland, Australia.



NAME: Gary Cochrane

DESCRIPTION: He is a 22-year-old male from outer suburban Ipswich, a fitter and turner by profession.

BACKGROUND

MOON PHASE: New Moon, January 12, 1994

WATER CONDITIONS: The river is tidal at the incident site, and the water was murky when the incident took place.

NARRATIVE: Cochrane fell off a kneeboard being towed behind a ski boat. "I was just starting to swim freestyle toward the boat when it bit me," said Cochrane. "I felt this thing swim into me. It grabbed hold of my thigh where my hamstring was. It really swam into me like it was trying to get a better grip. I couldn't believe it. It felt like the skin was being torn with a blunt object; you don't expect something that small to have a ferocious bite."

Cochrane lashed out at the shark with his fist and then called for help. "I knocked it backwards and then I turned around and saw where the boat was," he said. "I felt another part of it with my ankle and I've got pretty long legs. I yelled to my mate (in the boat) 'get me out of the water, get me out of the water'. He sort of helped me into the boat but he reckoned I walked on water to get back in (the boat)."

INJURY: He sustained a saucer-sized bite on the back of his thigh. Some of the teeth marks were nearly four centimetres deep.

FIRST AID: On the boat, Cochrane's friend administered first aid. "He grabbed a towel and wrapped it around the cut, putting pressure on it," said Cochrane. "It didn't bleed much at first, but later on it did," he said.

TREATMENT: Some 20 stitches were needed to repair the wound.

SPECIES INVOLVED: The shark was 1.5 metres in length. The location of the incident suggests that a bull shark was involved.

SOURCE: The Advertiser, Wednesday January 12, 1994, page 18