



**ACTIVITY:** Spearfishing  
**CASE:** [GSAF 1994.06.24](#)  
**DATE:** Thursday June 24, 1994  
**LOCATION:** Freeport, Grand Bahama Island, Bahamas.

**NAME:** Alton Curtis  
**DESCRIPTION:** He is a 30-year-old male, a Bahamian police officer and a father of three.

#### **BACKGROUND**

**MOON PHASE:** Full Moon, June 23, 1994  
**DEPTH OF WATER:** 20 feet  
**TIME:** 15h30

**NARRATIVE:** Alton Curtis had just left a 24-hour shift at his Freeport station and joined a group of colleagues for an afternoon of spearfishing. Toward the end of the trip, Curtis speared a two-foot hog snapper. As he retrieved the fish, the shark struck. "All of a sudden, he just hit me. I didn't see him," said Curtis. The shark clamped its jaws on Curtis' forearm, and jerked him back and forth. When Curtis stuck his hand in the shark's gills, the fish released him, and then he surfaced.

**INJURY:** Curtis sustained a deep (to the bone) 10-inch laceration to his right elbow and forearm.

**FIRST AID:** His comrades applied a tourniquet to control blood loss, then took him to Rand Memorial Hospital in Freeport for further care.

**TREATMENT:** Curtis was flown to North Ridge Medical Center in Broward, which often treats trauma cases from the Bahamas, and Pompano Beach plastic surgeon Dr. Jorge Perez and doctors Martin Coleman and Mitchell Seavey took over. Curtis was still bleeding when he arrived at 22h00. Surgical repair began two hours later, ending successfully at 05h00 on Friday. He remained hospitalized about two weeks.

**SPECIES:** Not identified. According to the spearfisherman the shark was about six feet in length.

**SOURCES:** Charles E. Hecker, Miami Herald, June 25, 1994, page 1BR; Miami Herald, July 9, 1994, et al