

**ACTIVITY:** Standing

**CASE:** **GSAF 2000.09.15**

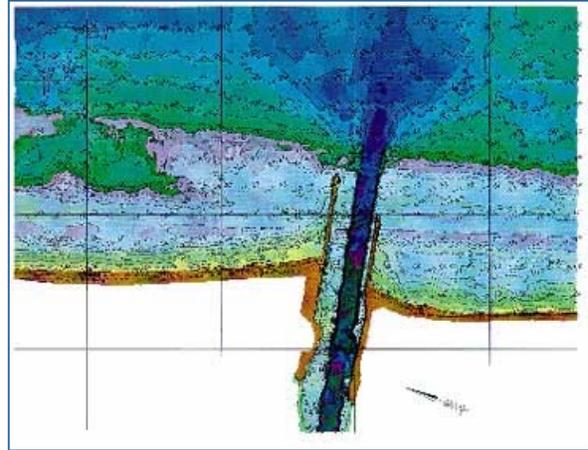
**DATE:** Friday September 15, 2000

**LOCATION:** The incident took place in the Atlantic Ocean just north of Fort Pierce Inlet, St. Lucie County, Florida, USA.

*27.4°N, 80.5°W*

**NAME:** Gary Smith

**DESCRIPTION:** The surfer, a 49-year-old male, was wearing a wetsuit.



### **BACKGROUND**

**WEATHER:** At 17h53, Fort Pierce recorded light rain and 10-mile visibility: The air temperature was 86°F [30°C], dew point 72°F [22.2°C], humidity 63%, sea level pressure 29.83 in [1010.1 hPa], and wind direction was South at 9.2 mph [14.8 km/h].

**MOON PHASE:** Full Moon, 97% of the moon's visible disk was illuminated.

**SEA CONDITIONS:** Hurricane Florence generated swells producing big waves and turbid water conditions. It was low tide and the water temperature was in the mid 80s.

**ENVIRONMENT:** "There were mullet everywhere. In fact, I was surfing at daybreak the same day and was chased out of the water by bull sharks feeding on the baitfish," recalls Smith.

**DEPTH OF WATER AT INCIDENT SITE:** Knee-deep to hip-deep

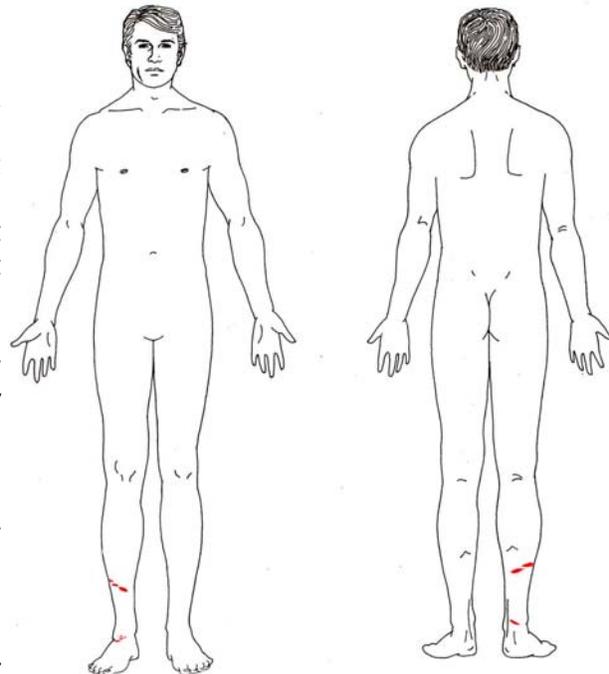
**TIME:** 18h00

**NARRATIVE:** There were at least 50 people surfing that evening. Smith had just caught a wave inshore and stepped off his board. "When I turned around to go back out, I felt something grab my ankle," said the surfer. "I knew it was a shark, but was surprised that it was in such shallow water. As soon as it realized I wasn't a fish, it let go."

**INJURY:** "The shark tore tendons around my ankle so my foot was just hanging from my leg."

**FIRST AID:** "A couple of fishermen carried me to the parking lot and used part of my wetsuit for a tourniquet to stop the bleeding while we waited for an ambulance."

**TREATMENT:** "The doctor spent over four hours repairing tendons to my toes and Tibialis anterior which allows me to lift my foot. I can move my ankle almost the normal range of motion. It took four months before I was physically able to go surfing again."



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**SPECIES INVOLVED:** Unknown

**SOURCES:** Shark Survivor, Inc.; Stuart News, September 19, 2000.