

**ACTIVITY:** Body boarding

**CASE:** [GSAF 2006.04.09.b](#)

**DATE:** Sunday April 9, 2006

**LOCATION:** The incident took place in the Indian Ocean at the main beach in St. Francis Bay, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa.

**NAME:** Stuart Duffie

**DESCRIPTION:** He is a 15-year-old male from St. Francis Bay, a Grade 8 boarder at Grey College.



*Stuart Duffie*

### **BACKGROUND**

**WEATHER:** Port Elizabeth weather bureau recorded a clear sky, visibility of 19 miles [30 kilometers], and sea level pressure of 30.06 inches [1018 hPa]. At 17h00, the air temperature was 67°F [19°C], dew point was 53°F [12°C], humidity was 51%, and there was an east wind at 9.2 mph [14.8 km/h]. At 18h00, the air temperature was 66.2°F [19°C], dew point was 55.4°F [13°C], humidity was 68%, and wind direction was east at 6.9 mph / 11.1 km/h.

**SEA CONDITIONS:** The water was full of sand and visibility was poor.

**MOON PHASE:** Waxing Gibbous, 84% of the moon's visible disk was illuminated.

**DEPTH:** Chest-deep

**TIME:** 17h30

**NARRATIVE:** Stuart Duffie was in the water with a friend, Michael Elliot-Murray, and was standing — waiting for a wave to break before diving under it. When he surfaced from the wave, the shark bit his left leg from below, lifting him straight up. It took him completely by surprise as he had not seen a fin, or felt a preliminary bump. Stuart screamed for Michael to get out of the water as he did not want his friend to be bitten. “My natural instinct was to fight it off and I punched it in the face but caught my fingers on its teeth and tore them. On the second punch, I managed to hit it on the nose and it let go. The release was worse — more painful than the bite,” Stuart said. “I was worried that the shark would come back as there was so much blood in the water, but Michael yanked me along and helped me out of the water. He was very brave,” Stuart said proudly.

**INJURY:** The shark attempted to grasp the boy's knee. There were multiple wounds above and below the knee, some of which were quite deep and penetrated the muscle.

**FIRST AID / TREATMENT:** Stuart's mother, Karen Hallam, had driven into the car park to fetch the boys seconds after the accident, saw that something was amiss and ran down the steps to the beach. Both boys were in shock and Michael collapsed on the beach once he had got Stuart to safety. Mrs. Hallam helped her son back up the steps to the shower. There was so much blood that she could not see the damage and needed to examine his leg. A friend meantime phoned Dr. Roberts who met them at the surgery. He stabilized Stuart and then attended to the bite. Ninety minutes and 44 stitches later, Stuart was able to go home.

**SPECIES:** Dr. Roberts said that the shark must have been about two and a half to three metres long and the marks left by the teeth are those of a raggedtooth shark. Station Commander of the local NSRI, Bob Meikle, contacted Dr. Malcolm Smale to examine the photos of the bite, and the photos were also forwarded to GSAF.

**CASE INVESTIGATOR:** John Visser

**SOURCE:** Our Times, April 14, 2006, et al.

