

ACTIVITY: Unknown, probable drowning

CASE: [GSAF 2006.04.23.R](#)

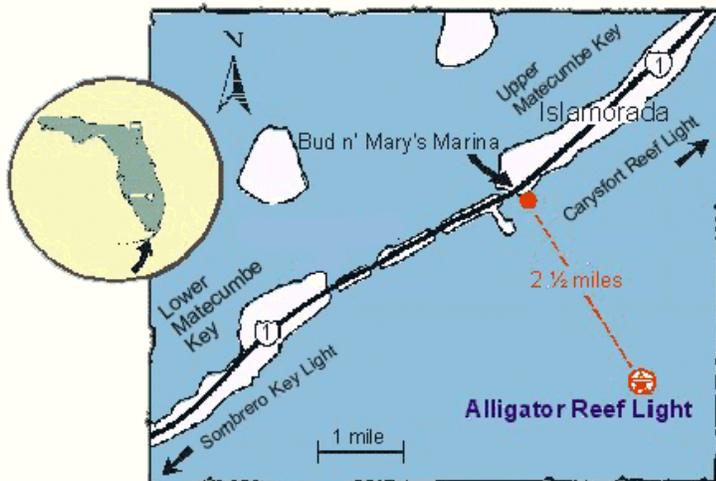
DATE: Sunday April 23, 2006

LOCATION: The remains were found in the Atlantic Ocean near Alligator Reef off Islamorada in the Florida Keys, Monroe County, Florida, USA.

NARRATIVE: Three sport fishermen from south Florida, Marcus Swinney, 56, David Marks, 49, and Lance Luvish, 59, were fishing for dolphin fish when they spotted what looked like a lobster trap buoy in about 125 feet of water. As it bobbed, Swinney circled in their 25-foot, rented Wellcraft. But something about the beige object did not look right. As they moved in, Swinney extended his hand and turned the object over in the water. "There was a face looking right at us," said Marks. "It had a full set of teeth and about eight vertebrae below the neckline," Swinney said. The rest of the body was nowhere in sight. The former Florida Highway Patrol auxiliaryist wasted no time. "Marc just grabbed the rib and pulled it right in the back of the boat," Marks said. The men radioed the Coast Guard and dialed 911, and for the next few minutes, sat on the boat and just stared. They sought comfort the only way they could. "We started drinking a few beers," Swinney said. When sheriff's deputies arrived, they transferred the remains to them, called it a day and motored back to a local marina.

INJURY: An examination by a Monroe County medical examiner on April 24, 2006, revealed the remains are likely those of a male. Although shark bites were present there was no evidence of trauma inflicted before death. The remains were scheduled to be shipped to the University of Florida's Pound Human Identification Lab, where forensic anthropologists will try to discern more details about its origin, age and race. "In this type of case, it's a process that's going to take time. We need that estimation of the general physical characteristics of the person," said Dr. Michael Hunter, Monroe's chief medical examiner. Hunter estimates the head had been in the water for as long as a week. It was believed possible the head could belong to a Cuban migrant who perished trying to reach Florida, and thought likely that this incident was a case of drowning and scavenging rather than a shark attack.

SOURCE: KRT Wire, April 24, 2006, <http://www.ledger->



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