

ACTIVITY: Swimming

CASE: [GSAF 2011.09.28.a](#)

DATE: Wednesday September 28, 2011

LOCATION: The attack took place in False Bay at Clovelly Corner, Fish Hoek, Western Cape Province, South Africa.

NAME: Michael Cohen

DESCRIPTION: He is a 43-year-old male, an accountant from the United Kingdom. was wearing navy blue swimming shorts and black goggles, and had bangles on one arm and a watch on the other. He was known to the Shark Spotters and had previously repeatedly ignored their admonitions to adhere to the shark warnings and beach closures. His car was parked in the main parking area at Fish Hoek beach indicating that he had accessed the beach from the well signposted area where the shark warning flag was flying.



Michael Cohen

BACKGROUND

WEATHER: There was a gently south-westerly breeze.

MOON PHASE: New Moon, September 28, 2011

SEA CONDITIONS: The sea was calm and the water was clear.

ENVIRONMENT: White sharks had been seen in the bay for the previous four days. Since 09h15, on the day of the attack two white sharks had been observed patrolling the inshore area of Fish Hoek, and the shark spotter noted they were spending time in very shallow water in Clovelly Corner near the river mouth. The smaller shark was about two to three metres in length, while the larger shark was four to five metres. Their behavior was described as "relaxed".

Once the sharks moved out of the bay the Red Warning Flag was raised. At 10h50, the Shark Spotters saw the two sharks within the bay again. The beach was cleared of swimmers and the White Shark Flag was raised, but due to an Eskom-related city-wide electrical failure shark siren did not sound.

DISTANCE FROM SHORE: 25 to 50 metres

TIME: Shortly after 12h25

NARRATIVE: At 12h25, the mountain shark spotter saw Michael Cohen enter the water near Clovelly Corner, and notified his colleague on the beach as well as Monwabisi Sikweyiya, the Shark Spotting operations manager by radio. The spotter began to run toward Clovelly corner to warn the swimmer while Monwabisi drove to Clovelly corner.

Cohen was between the breakers and the beach. He was swimming parallel to the beach in a southerly direction just off the brown water flowing from the Silvermine River mouth. The larger shark of the two sharks was swimming between the swimmer and the shore in very shallow water. The second, smaller shark was a fair distance away from the swimmer. The shark swam past the swimmer into deeper water and made a large circle around him at a relaxed pace then swam up behind the swimmer.

A witness, 16-year-old Kyle James, saw the shark "casually and slowly" approach Cohen from

behind. Cohen appeared unaware of the shark's presence. When the shark was about two metres from the swimmer, James said the shark raised slightly out of the water, lunged for the swimmer, shook him once, then let go and moved off five to 10 metres away.

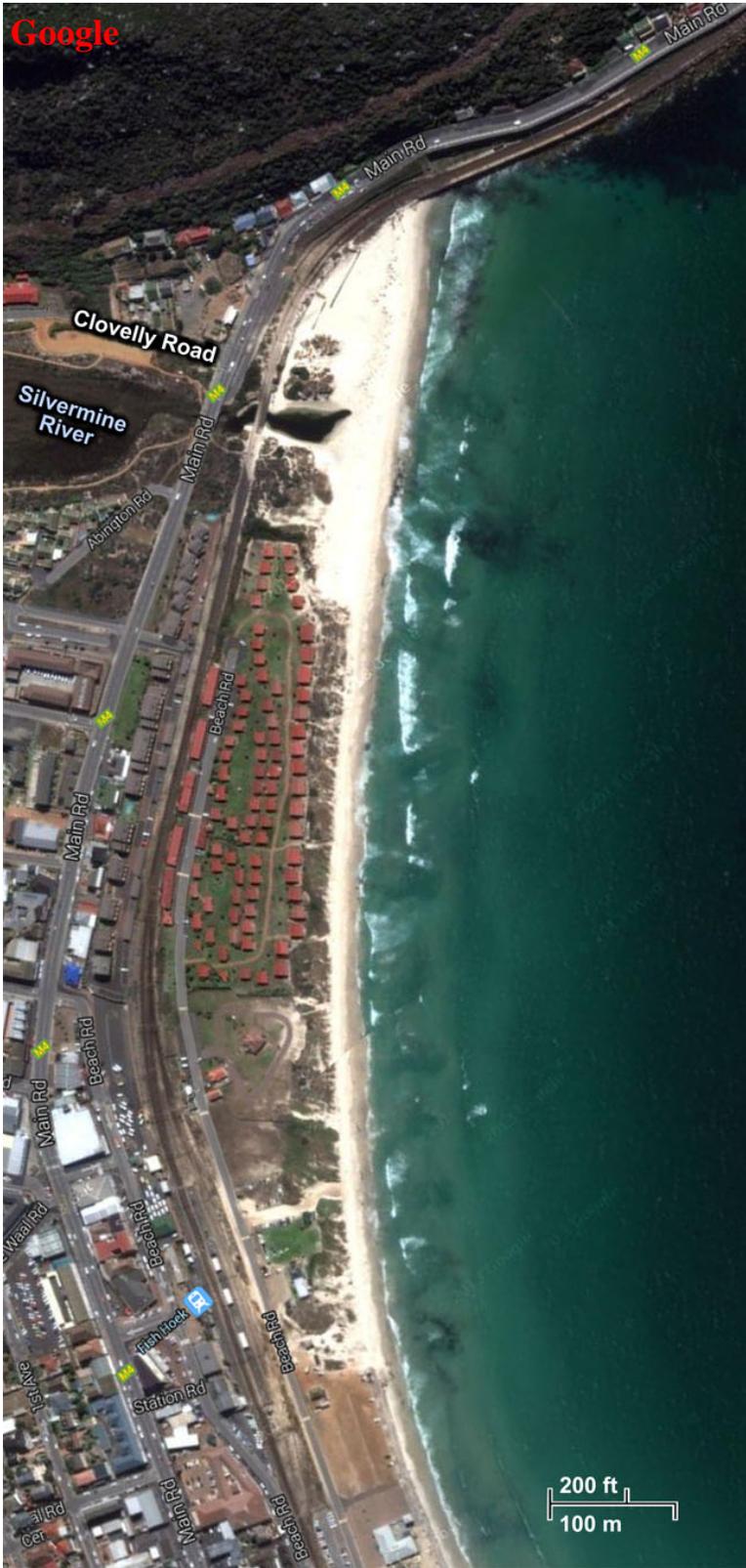
Two men, 61-year-old Douglas Drysdale of Glencairn Heights and 66-year-old Hugh Till of Fish Hoek, were returning from Pollsmoor Prison where they are voluntary spiritual guidance counsellors. They usually looked out for whales while rounding Clovelly Corner on Main Road on their way back. They observed Cohen swimming in the direction of Fish Hoek and saw a dark shape appear about 30 metres in front of him. As the dark shape grew closer to the swimmer, the two men realised it was a shark. They drove into the car park, called emergency services and ran onto the beach. Cohen was by then struggling in the water and the sea around him was bloodied. They kicked off their shoes, plunged into the water and waded through the surf to reach the injured swimmer. Till grabbed Cohen by the hand. Drysdale grabbed Till and dragged both men shorewards.

INJURY: Mr. Cohen lost his right leg and part of his left foot.

FIRST AID: At the scene, shark spotting operations manager Monwabisi Sikweyiya removed his belt and applied it as a tourniquet. He elevated Cohen's leg, used his shorts to stem the bleeding, and contacted NSRI and EMS. Cohen was stabilised before being taken by helicopter to hospital in Constantiaberg.

SPECIES: The attack involved a white shark.





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