

ACTIVITY: Swimming / Sea disaster

CASE: [GSAF 1981.08.10.a](#)

DATE: August 10, 1981

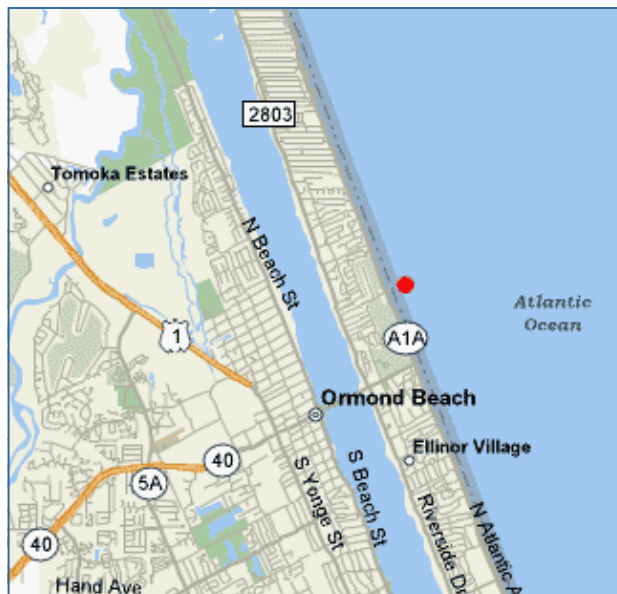
LOCATION: The attack took place in the Atlantic Ocean off Ormond Beach, Volusia County, Florida, USA.

NAME: Christy Wapniarski

DESCRIPTION: She was a 19-year-old female, a student at Embry Riddle Aeronautical University in Daytona.

BACKGROUND

MOON PHASE: Waxing Gibbous, 74% of the moon's visible disk was illuminated
Waxing Gibbous, 74% Moon. Full Moon, August 15, 2006.



NARRATIVE: Four young people set off in a catamaran off from the Granada Boulevard approach in Ormond Beach for a day's sail. On board were 21-year-old Daniel Perrin, owner of the catamaran, and his friends 21-year-old Tami Ennis, 25-year-old Randall Cohen and his girlfriend, Christy Wapniarski. They set sail about noon, but an hour later they noticed the hull was leaking. The group returned to shore where Perrin repaired the boat with duct tape. They set sail once again but at 18h20 the catamaran sprang another leak. Lacking life preservers or jackets, they clung to the craft throughout the night, enduring a strong storm.

When dawn broke, they were six, possibly nine miles offshore. The four decided to abandon the catamaran and swim to shore. Christy was not a strong swimmer. Cohen tried to carry her with him. "It was exhausting; I couldn't do it for more than five minutes at a time," he said. In an interview afterwards, Ennis said that Christy began thrashing the water and calling for help. "Christy had yelled something about a shark," she said. "I saw her being picked up and down and saw the water around her change color; she came up too high and too fast." Cohen realized Christy's right thigh was bitten. "It looked like a bite and a tear and I couldn't find her left leg," he said. "I swam with her for about 15 minutes, but I kept going under." Cohen and Perrin tried to carry Christy to shore but when they realized she was dead they abandoned her body. Eight hours later the three survivors staggered ashore near the Granada Boulevard approach. For three days the Coast Guard conducted a massive air search but failed to recover Christy's body.

INJURY: Fatal. Her left leg was severed and tissue was removed from the right thigh from groin to knee.

SPECIES INVOLVED: Unknown.

NOTE: In August 1982 a \$10 million lawsuit was filed against the catamaran's manufacturer, North American Catamaran Racing Association, Inc., by the estate of Christy

Wapniarski, accusing the company of negligence in the design and construction of the catamaran. In October 1984 a jury awarded Christy's parents \$450,000 in damages. In December 1985, the 5th District Court of Appeals reversed that decision.

SOURCES: John McAniff and Morris Vorenberg, International Shark Attack Center; Electa Pace, University of Miami; Daily Herald, August 31, 1981; Orlando Sentinel, December 6, 1985; Karen Duffy, Daytona Beach News Journal, August 26, 2001.