

CASE: GSAF 1982.09.04

DATE: Saturday September 4, 1982

LOCATION: The incident took place in the Atlantic Ocean just 1.5 miles off Hollywood Beach, Broward County, Florida, USA. Hollywood Beach is located about 10 miles south of Fort Lauderdale.



NARRATIVE: Al Laurino, a charter boat owner from Davie, and Bobby Colville went on an all-night shark-fishing expedition Friday night. After a two-hour battle, they reeled in a tiger shark at 05h30 on Saturday. They returned to shore where the shark was gutted. Inside the shark's belly they found a pair of human legs in its belly. The right leg had on a sock and an Adidas tennis shoe. There was also a thigh portion of the left leg.

The baffled fishermen immediately called Hollywood police, who then notified the Broward Medical Examiner's Office. The tiger shark was transported to the medical examiner's office. Chief medical examiner Dr. Ronald Wright performed an autopsy on the body parts in an attempt to identify the remains. The limbs were believed to be those of a white male in his early 20s, weighing about 190 pounds, and between 5 feet 11 inches and 6 feet tall, according to Wright. The cause and time of death were unknown, nor were investigators able to determine if the man was dead or alive when the shark consumed the remains one to four days earlier. "We can't classify the death as accidental, or homicide or suicide or due to natural causes," said Steve Cory, an investigator for the medical examiner's office.

People rarely go swimming wearing shoes, but Corey added, "we've had no missing persons reports and we've had no reported shark attacks. "A shark of that size can travel 100 miles in a circle so it could have been anywhere from Palm Beach to the Keys to the Bahamas," Cory said.

The last time the Broward Medical Examiner's Office had a case even similar was about a year ago when a chewed torso was found floating in the ocean near Fort Lauderdale. In February, a skin diver, Kim Seibel of Homestead, disappeared off Elliott Key. His swimsuit and some of his diving gear were found, bearing numerous marks from shark's teeth. It was unclear if Seibel was attacked while alive.

On Saturday, questions about the tiger shark's travels and the mystery man also were left unanswered. But fisherman Laurino ventured a guess: "I don't think he attacked anybody. I would say the person was dead already when the shark ate him," Laurino said. "And the sneaker tells me it wasn't a diver."

SPECIES: A 364-pound, nine-foot, five-inch tiger shark.

SOURCE: Zita Arocha, Miami Herald, September 5, 1982, page 1B