

**ACTIVITY:** Surfing

**CASE:** GSAF 1986.12.11

**DATE:** Thursday December 11, 1986

**LOCATION:** The incident took place in the Atlantic Ocean on the New Smyrna Beach side of Ponce de Leon Inlet, Volusia County, Florida, USA.

29.1°N, 81.0°W

**NAME:** Bob Earnhardt

**DESCRIPTION:** He is a 40-year-old male.

#### **BACKGROUND**

**MOON PHASE:** Waxing Gibbous, 80% of the Moon's visible disk was illuminated. Full Moon, December 16, 1986.

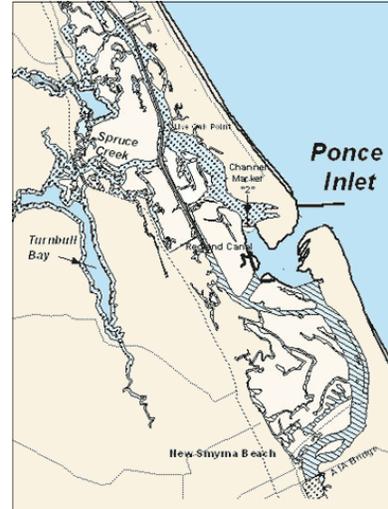
**SEA CONDITIONS:** The water was cloudy.

**ENVIRONMENT:** The surfers had seen a spinner or blacktip shark swimming in the area earlier in the days. The waters near the jetty are full of gamefish and draw surfers because of the wave formations that break there, according to lifeguards.

**DISTANCE FROM SHORE:** 100 yards

**DEPTH OF WATER:** Chest-deep

**TIME:** 14h00



**NARRATIVE:** Bob Earnhardt was lying on his surfboard, paddling against the waves when a shark grabbed his forearm. He did not see the shark before it bit him. Bill Brown, who was surfing 50 yards away, went to his assistance. Brown said that just before he reached Earnhardt, "He just pulled his arm out." Earnhardt hopped into the water and sprinted to the beach.

**INJURY:** The surfer sustained lacerations to his right forearm and hand.

**FIRST AID / TREATMENT:** Earnhardt wrapped a towel around the wounds. Then Brown drove him in his pickup truck to the nearest lifeguard station, about three miles away. Earnhardt was taken by ambulance to Fish Memorial Hospital in New Smyrna Beach. Then he was transferred to Ormond Beach Memorial Hospital where reconstructive surgery was performed.

**SPECIES INVOLVED:** The shark was said to be six to seven feet in length. Brown believed it was the spinner or black tip shark the two men had seen swimming near the area earlier in the day.

**NOTE:** Captain Joe Wooden of the Volusia County Beach Patrol said the shark may have struck at the turbulence which Earnhardt created paddling in the surf. The shark mistook the moving water for game, he said. Wooden said the beach patrol did not attempt to clear the beach because there were no bathers in the area.

**SOURCE:** Al Truesdell, Orlando Sentinel, December 12, 1986 edition, page A1