



**ACTIVITY:** Surfing

**CASE:** 1989.07.20 / SA-372

**DATE:** Thursday July 20, 1989

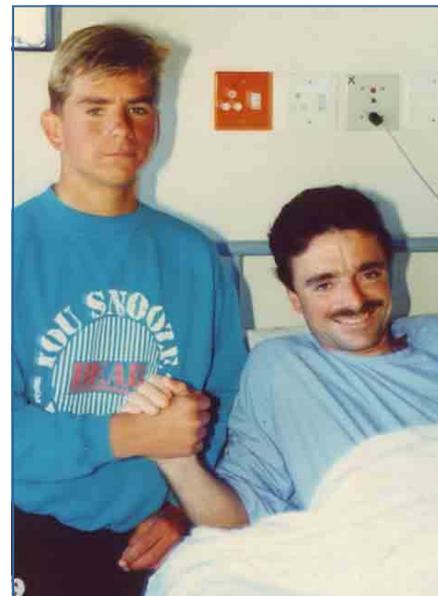
**LOCATION:** The incident took place in the Indian Ocean at Supertubes in Jeffreys Bay, 92 kilometres west-southwest of Port Elizabeth in the Eastern Cape Province, South Africa.

34°03'S, 24°56'E

**NAME:** Edward Razzano

**DESCRIPTION:** The surfer, a 34-year-old male, is 1,75 metres tall and weighs 69 kilograms. He was clad in a black Reef West Coast five-millimetre full wetsuit with faded blue sleeves and faded blue booties. He wore a blue leash on his right ankle and a gold ring on his right hand. The surfer had scratched himself on some mussels at Seal Point three days earlier and although the wound was raw it was not bleeding.

**SURFBOARD:** The board is a 1,93-metre Cape Energy white trifin with blue fins.



*Left to right: Roniel Jacobs & Ed Razzano. Roniel's board was damaged by a white shark 15 days earlier at the same location.*

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## BACKGROUND

**WEATHER:** The day was cold but sunny and there was a 10- to 15-knot southwesterly breeze.

**MOON PHASE:** Waning Gibbous with 96% of the Moon was illuminated. There was a Full Moon on July 18, 1989. This incident occurred two days after spring high tide.

**SEA CONDITIONS:** There were 1,2- to 1,8-metre easterly swells and the water was choppy. The water was not clear because of turbulence and the sand suspension. Sea surface temperature was measured at 14°C. The incident occurred at low tide.

**ENVIRONMENT:** Jeffreys Bay is a half-moon shaped bay and the sandy beach is rimmed by a rocky reef. Shoals of 10-centimetre fish were feeding at the surface near The Point earlier in the week and five minutes before the incident a pod of dolphins passed through the Bay within 10 to 15 metres of the surfer.

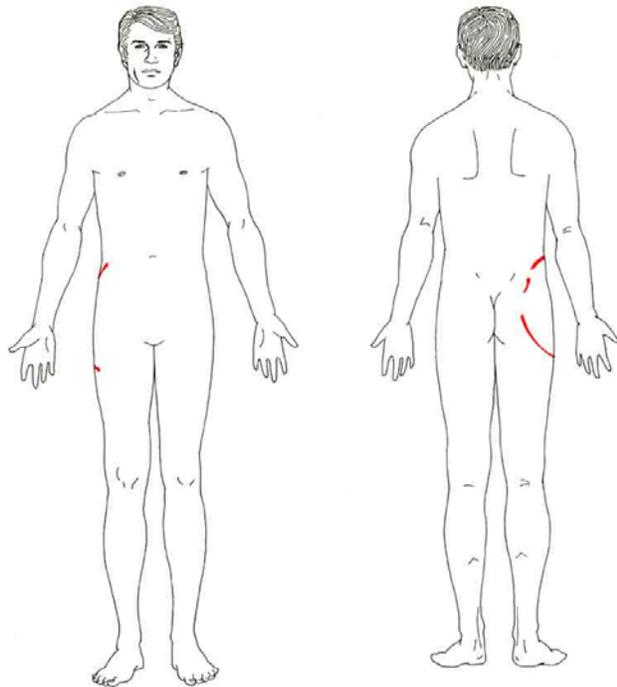
**DISTANCE FROM SHORE:** The incident took place 40 metres from the reef, in the impact zone of the surf.

**DEPTH:** Three metres

**TIME:** 10h35

**NARRATIVE:** Edward Razzano had been in the water for about an hour and was closer to shore than the 25 to 30 other surfers in the water. Lance Kabot, another surfer who was nearby, said, "I saw this huge shark following (Razzano) almost lazily when suddenly it launched itself at him, its jaws wide open." Razzano was lying prone on his board, paddling shorewards and looking to his left in anticipation of the wave, when he was tilted backwards and felt his body clamped tightly to his board. Quizzical, he swept his right hand backwards and touched the dorsal fin of the shark. Then the wave broke over him. "It was strange not to be spun around in the water by the action of the wave," he said..

*"(The shark) must have let go just a fraction of a second after the wave broke...It opened its mouth and it felt as if the board and I popped out, but I became separated from my board. I felt the shark go under my feet and couldn't see it in the turbulence. At that stage I wasn't sure it was a shark; I thought it may have been a dolphin gone mad. And I wanted the board between myself and the animal, ram the board in its mouth if necessary. The adrenalin was really pumping; I was making sounds I didn't think humans could make! Then it was gone. I remounted my board and "Paddled for Africa", caught a foamy and dropped on the reef."*



**INJURY:** The surfer's right side was bitten; the bite encompassed the upper thigh, buttock and extended to a point just above the hip. No major vessels or nerves were severed and the bowel was not damaged.

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**DAMAGE TO EQUIPMENT:** An arc of widely-spaced tooth impressions was visible on the underside of the surfboard.

**FIRST AID:** When the surfer reached the beach two doctors who had been in the water carried him on to the beach and first aid was administered by them in the car park. Digital pressure was used to control blood loss, intravenous fluid replacement was initiated and he was kept warm. The ambulance arrived but the doctors would not let him be moved until his condition had stabilized. The surfer reached Humansdorp Hospital, ten kilometres from Jeffreys Bay, about 11h20.

**TREATMENT:** At Humansdorp Hospital the surfer was treated by Dr Gideon van der Spuy. The wounds were debrided and sutured under general anaesthesia; 102 stitches were needed to close the wound. Aggressive prophylactic antibiotic therapy was initiated. Recovery was uneventful and he was discharged on Monday July 24, 1989. The surfer was referred to Dr Davies for further treatment on an outpatient basis.

**SPECIES INVOLVED:** The width of the bite was 31 centimetres and the distance between points of insertion of the front teeth of the lower jaw was 4,5 centimetres. Based on this measurement it was concluded that the incident involved a white shark, *Carcharodon carcharias*, at least 2,53 metres in length with a mass of 370 kilograms.

**COMMENT:** Like most people bitten by a white shark, the surfer reports that he experienced no pain initially; he felt no pain until he was in the ambulance. Contrary to press reports the shark did not hit the surfer with force; he describes it as a “gentle investigatory bite”.

**CASE INVESTIGATORS:** Ray Joseph, *Our Times*; Marie Levine



*Left: Ed Razzano's board  
Right: Roniel Jacobs' board*



*Lighting brings out  
details of tooth  
impressions in  
the two surfboards*

# Surfer savaged by shark at Jeffreys Bay

Mercury Reporter

A JOHANNESBURG surfer holidaying at Jeffreys Bay in the Eastern Cape was savaged by a shark yesterday while other surfers watched helplessly from the rocks.

A witness, Derek Hynd, a professional surfer and journalist from Australia, said that Mr Ed Rezano, 34, was savaged by a 2 m long shark while out at an area known as Supertubes.

'The surf was big and there was a large group of guys out at the time.

'I was paddling for a wave when I saw the shark swimming up behind me.

'I was knocked off my board by the wave and the shark attacked Ed, who was taking off further down the line,' said Mr Hynd.

He said that the shark, which he believed was a great white, attacked Mr Rezano — clamping its jaws over the surfer and his board.

'He was bitten twice on the hips,' said Mr Hynd.

Mr Rezano was helped to shore by other surfers.

'There were other surfers on the rocks, waiting to enter the surf. All they could do was watch helplessly from the rocks while the shark circled other surfers in the water for about five minutes,' said Mr Hynd.

Mr Rezano was treated on the rocks by ambulance men before being taken to hospital.

Nobody else was injured in the attack.

Mr Rezano is in a stable condition at the Humansdorp Provincial Hospital.