



**ACTIVITY:** Swimming

**CASE:** [GSAF 1990.11.28](#)

**DATE:** Wednesday November 28, 1990

**LOCATION:** The incident took place in the Nerang River, about a kilometre from Surfers Paradise, Queensland, Australia.

**NAME:** Michael Pignolet

**DESCRIPTION:** He is a 26-year-old male, a lifeguard.

#### **BACKGROUND**

**MOON PHASE:** First Quarter, November 26, 1990

**ENVIRONMENT:** This incident is one of several in the canal system in just over a year. The most recent took place last month just a few kilometres away in Mermaid Waters when a shark bit 26-year-old Craig Coleman's right leg and buttock, an injury that required 200 stitches to repair. Last year 10-year-old Kristoffer Frederickson [[GSAF1989.11.02](#)] needed micro-surgery to save his left leg after he was bitten by a shark only metres from where Coleman was injured by a shark.



**NARRATIVE:** Michael Pignolet and another lifesaver were training in the Nerang River. Michael was swimming from the bank of the canal to the Isle of Capri when he felt something pushing him.

His housemate, 26-year-old John Stewart, said Michael told him he thought his swimming partner had caught up to him. "The other guy was swimming about five metres behind Michael when he felt something at his feet, but he thought that he could not have caught up to him that fast," Stewart said. "It (the shark) really surprised him. It just swam up behind him and grabbed him." Michael's fellow lifesaver thought he was "mucking around" when he began to thrash in the water after the shark's first bite. "The other guy told him to stop mucking around, but when he saw the look on his face he realised something was wrong," Stewart said. "Michael yelled to him to get out of the water because there was a shark, and they both swam straight for the bank."

Stewart said the shark continued to follow Michael and bite him as he swam to the beach. "It had a couple of goes at him and he didn't think he was going to get out. He thought it was going to get him again."

**INJURY:** He sustained bites on his abdomen, hip, leg and arm. Stewart said Michael was a "big bloke," but the shark still left up to 20 injuries resembling slashes with a knife on his right hip and his right arm had a "chunk taken out of it".

**TREATMENT:** The lifesaver was treated in a Gold Coast hospital.

**SPECIES:** Not positively identified, but thought to be a bull shark 1.5 metres in length.

**SOURCE:** Herald Sun, Friday November 30, 1990, page 34