

ACTIVITY: Swimming

CASE: GSAF 1991.06.07.b

DATE: Friday June 7, 1991

LOCATION: The incident took place in the Gulf of Mexico in Tampa Bay, Florida, USA.

NAME: Rick LePrevost

DESCRIPTION: The swimmer, a 31-year-old male, is a paramedic with the St. Petersburg Fire Department.

BACKGROUND

WEATHER: At 12h00, St. Petersburg recorded scattered clouds and 15-mile visibility. The air temperature was 81°F, dew point 69.1°F, humidity 67%, sea level pressure 30.00 inches and wind direction was East at 5.8 mph.

MOON PHASE: Waning Crescent, 29% of the Moon was illuminated. Third Quarter, June 5, 1991. New Moon, June 12, 1991.

DISTANCE FROM SHORE: 1.5 miles east of St. Petersburg's Albert Whitted Airport.

DEPTH OF WATER AT INCIDENT SITE: 20 feet

TIME: 11h30

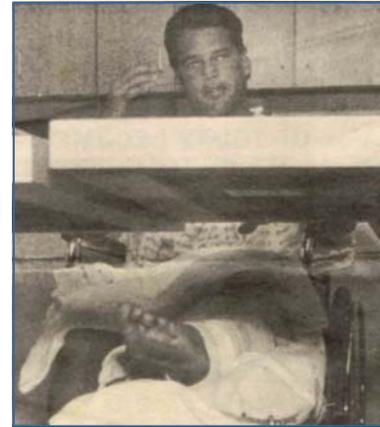
NARRATIVE: Rick LePrevost and a friend had gone sailing with his three children: eight-year-old Adam, five-year-old Austin and six-year-old Lindsey. The group were swimming around his sailboat, playing a game of "jump off the boat and swim to Daddy". Austin was about to jump in the water, Lindsey was making her way back to the boat and Adam was hanging onto Rick when he felt a quick bump and then was yanked underwater. He surfaced and hurled his son toward the boat and screamed. "My thought was for my kids," he said. Then Rick scrambled up the boat's metal ladder.

INJURY: His ankle, calf, left thigh and abdomen were bitten. The most serious wound was in the thigh where two inches of tissue had been removed.

TREATMENT: Rick was rushed to Bayfront Medical Center in Tampa where surgeon Steven Epstein repaired the wounds in a two-hour surgical procedure.

SPECIES INVOLVED: It was thought that a bull shark or a lemon shark about 2.7 metres in length was involved in this incident.

SOURCES: Ken O'Hara; Orlando Sentinel; June 9, 1991, page B3; Ocala Star-Banner, June 8, 1991; St. Petersburg Times, November 28, 1991



LePrevost after surgery



The shark's teeth marks on LePrevost's swim trunks

SAVED FROM THE JAWS OF DEATH

Victim describes how it feels to be torn apart by a shark



• RICK'S SWIM trunks show shark's teeth marks

SHARK-ATTACK victim Rick LePrevost didn't realize how badly he was injured until he saw blood gushing from his leg — where five huge chunks of flesh had been ripped away.

"It was like a bump and pull," says Rick, 31, who had gone sailing in Tampa Bay, Florida with his three children and a friend.

"The first hit that I took yanked me down. I came up — and my next thought was for my kids."

The group had been swimming around the boat in 20-foot-deep water. They were playing a game of "jump off the boat



• **"THANK GOD I'm alive and my kids weren't hurt," says Rick, now recovering**

and swim to Daddy" — and 8-year-old Adam was hanging onto him when he felt a quick bump.

He hurled his son toward the boat and began screaming.

At the terrifying moment when the shark struck, 5-year-old Austin was about to jump in the water and his 6-year-old sister Lindsey was holding a rope, making her way back to the boat.

Blood flows

Luckily, none of the kids was hurt.

Rick remembers being bitten once before he could scramble up the metal boat ladder to safety.

As he flung himself on deck, he could see blood pouring out of his leg and could even see the shark's teeth marks in his flesh.

Rick was rushed to Bayfront Medical Center in Tampa, where surgeons treated massive

wounds to his left thigh, ankle and calf muscle.

The worst wounds were in the thigh, where the shark ripped away two inches of flesh.

Rick ended up with severe scars, says Dr. Steven Epstein, who operated on him for two hours.

But Rick — a para-

medic for the St. Petersburg Fire Department — says he has plenty of reasons to be grateful.

"I thank God I'm alive and that my kids weren't hurt," he says.

"As for my leg, it really hurts. It feels like someone chewed on it."

— KEN O'HARA

YOU?
wrong bed
him in jail

Do you honestly think you can have sex with a person for 20 minutes and not know who they are?"

But another woman told the court that Irvine had once pulled the same trick on her.

Irvine served a year in prison but his conviction was overturned when an appeals court decided the second woman's testimony should not have been allowed at the trial because she had never filed charges against Irvine.

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