

ACTIVITY: Surfing

CASE: [GSAF 1992.03.08.a](#)

DATE: Sunday March 8, 1992

LOCATION: The incident took place in the Pacific Ocean south of the jetty in Winchester Bay at Ziolkowski State Beach near Reedsport in west central Oregon, USA.
43°39.7'N; 124°12.8'W

NAME: Mike Allman

DESCRIPTION: He is a 21-year-old male, and was wearing a black and dark-blue wetsuit.

SURBOARD: A white surfboard

BACKGROUND

WEATHER: The sky was clear, the air temperature was 15°C to 18°C, and there was a light breeze.

MOON PHASE: Waxing Crescent, 15% of the moon's visible disk was illuminated. Full Moon on 18 March 1992.

SEA CONDITIONS: The sea was glassy smooth with small ground swells. The water temperature was 10°C to 13°C, and underwater visibility was two to three metres.

ENVIRONMENT: The incident took place over a sandy bottom broken by an occasional large rock.

DISTANCE FROM SHORE: 100 metres

DEPTH OF WATER AT INCIDENT SITE: One to two fathoms

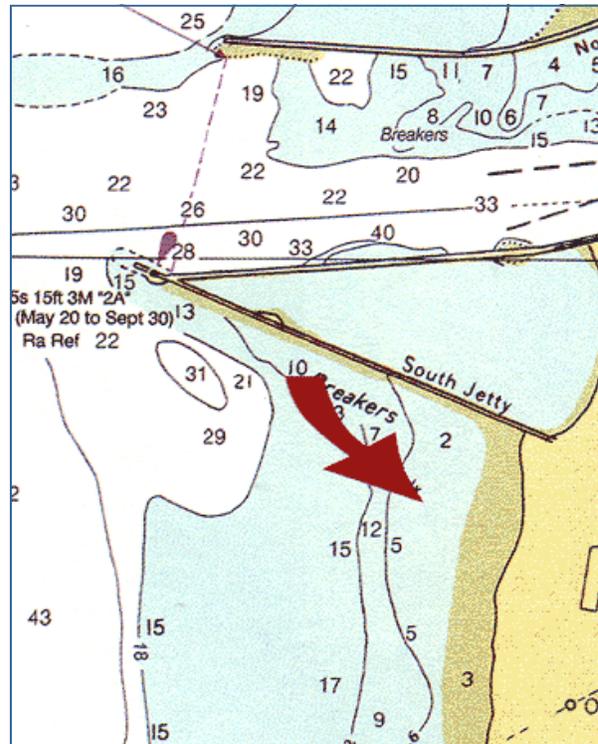
TIME: 09h45

NARRATIVE: Mike Allman had been in the water about 45 minutes when the shark struck. "I was sitting upright on my board, about 100 yards from shore and 15 to 20 yards south of the Umpqua Jetty," he said. "I didn't know I had been attacked until the shark broke my board in half and had my left shoulder in its mouth."

The shark had struck directly from beneath the surfer, simultaneously grasping his left shoulder and surfboard in its mouth. The shark's momentum carried it up out of the water, striking the surfer's face. Allman's account continues, "I think the shark hit my chin and I went over sideways and backwards, with the shark releasing me within only a second or two of hitting me and the board."

The shark remained at the surface while Allman, having been knocked off his board, was a few feet below the surface. Upon surfacing, he saw the back of a "huge" white shark. The shark was bobbing up and down in the waves created when it struck the surfer and his board. This wave action brought the two together. In response, the surfer used his right arm to push off the shark as it slowly swam past. "I grabbed what remained of my surfboard and began paddling as hard as I could toward shore, screaming, 'Shark, Shark, it bit me.'"

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A friend swam out to Allman, escorting him through the surf to the safety of the beach.

INJURY: Emergency room physicians described Mike Allman's injuries as "numerous razor-like punctures, with several lengthy slashes to the left arm, shoulder and waist. A 10- to 15-centimetre cut to his left shoulder was about five centimetres deep. He had several additional slash wounds to his arm, with a five- to 10-centimetre cut in the area of the left waist."

FIRST AID / TREATMENT: While watching the rescuer struggle to shore with the injured surfer, several companions and tourists called 911. Within a few minutes, paramedics arrived and cut away a portion of Allman's wetsuit so they could apply bandages to his neck and shoulder. The surfer was transported to Bay Area Hospital in Coos Bay. About 25 sutures were necessary to close the injuries received by the surfer. He was expected to make a full recovery.

SPECIES INVOLVED: According to the surfer, the incident involved a white shark, six to seven metres in length.

SOURCE: Ralph Collier (2003), pages 130-132

CASE INVESTIGATOR: Ralph Collier

Photograph courtesy of John Griffith

