

ACTIVITY: Paddling

CASE: [GSAF 1993.01.04](#)

DATE: January 4, 1993

LOCATION: The incident took place in the Caribbean Sea / Gulf of Mexico off the Dominican Republic.

BOAT: Canoe, 19 feet x 33 inches

OCCUPANTS: Chris Newman and Stewart Newman

BACKGROUND

ENVIRONMENT: The brothers ran out of food on December 23, 1992. On January 4, they had captured and butchered a dolphin. According to Chris Newman, the sharks were attracted to oil and blood from the dolphin that seeped from the canoe into the sea.

NARRATIVE: Chris and Stewart Newman were attempting to paddle from Europe to mainland USA. *See press clipping on next page.*

INJURY: No injury to occupants, but their canoe was damaged by the sharks.

SPECIES: Two 3-metre [10-foot] oceanic whitetip sharks.

SOURCE: The Times (London), January 13, 1993; Alex McCormick

Two British brothers have arrived in Jamaica exhausted and starving after sharks attacked and damaged their canoe in the Caribbean, forcing them to abandon an attempt to become the first to paddle from Europe to mainland America.

Chris and Stuart Newman, from Middlesbrough, Cleveland, England, said yesterday that they clung to their capsized canoe for four hours in the middle of the night as sharks spun it round. By daylight the sharks had disappeared, but it was another five days before they came ashore on the sixty-eighth day of their attempt to cross from Portugal to Florida. The brothers are now recovering in hospital in Port Antonio, where they are being treated for malnutrition and salt-water boils.

Chris Newman, 32, said yesterday that the sharks were attracted by oil and blood seeping into the sea from a dolphin they caught south of the Dominican Republic on 4 January.

"We ran out of food on 23 December and the dolphin was to have been an excellent source of food. We butchered it and attached it to the canoe, but it attracted two white-tipped sharks," he said.

As one of the ten-foot sharks rubbed against the canoe, the brothers tried to scare it off by spearing it with a harpoon, but it dropped behind the canoe and was joined by another shark. They tore into the dolphin and damaged the canoe as they spun it round.

Stuart, 30, said: "We hung on for dear life. We could not right the canoe because that would have meant falling into the water again, so we waited for about four hours, for daylight, and by then the sharks were nowhere to be seen."

With no food and their navigation equipment destroyed, the brothers realised their record attempt was over. On Saturday they sighted Jamaica and early the next day they came ashore at Manchi-oneal, on the east of the island. But their ordeal did not end there. Chris said: "Starving and barely able to stand up, we found some coconuts to eat. When daylight came, a fisherman gave us some of his catch, but others tried to steal our equipment. But, since then, we have been well looked after in the hospital."

The brothers' canoe was so small, measuring 19 ft x 33 ins, that they could not take enough food for the crossing and had planned to rely on fish, but fishing was so bad that, after their food ran out on 23 December, they radioed a passing vessel for supplies.

The brothers, who are both former oil-riggers, will still go into the record books for travelling the furthest distance across the sea in the smallest boat. However, Chris said he was disappointed not to have made the crossing: "We will try again. We know we can cope physically in the ocean, but we need bigger sponsors."

Members of the brothers' family were less happy to hear they were contemplating another attempt after the failure of their third transatlantic crossing. Stuart's wife, Amanda, said, "I cannot order him to stop, but I will urge him to change tack. He has given me such a fright, but thank God he is alive." Their mother, Ada, added: "They have always been an adventurous pair and I just hope this will calm them down."

The Times, London, 13 January 1993