

ACTIVITY: Hookah diving

CASE: [GSAF 1994.12.09.a](#)

DATE: Friday December 9, 1994

LOCATION: The incident took place the Pacific Ocean off Castle Rock, near Westcott Shoal, located near the northwest corner of San Miguel Island, Santa Barbara County, California, USA.

34°03.7'N; 120°26.3'W

NAME: James Robinson

DESCRIPTION: He was a 42-year-old male, a commercial urchin diver. He was wearing a black wetsuit with mask, fins, weight belt, and was using hookah gear.

SUPPORT BOAT: The 12-metre dive boat *Florentia Marie*

BACKGROUND

WEATHER: The sky was clear.

MOON PHASE: Waxing Crescent, 46% of the Moon's visible disk was illuminated. Full Moon on December 18, 1994.

SEA CONDITIONS: The sea was calm.

ENVIRONMENT:

DISTANCE FROM SHORE: 300 to 400 metres

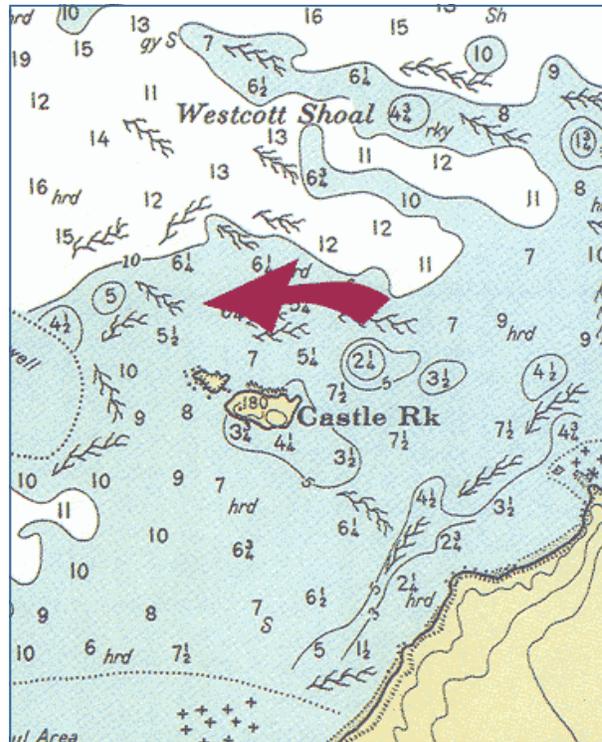
DEPTH OF WATER AT INCIDENT SITE:

TIME: 09h00

NARRATIVE: James Robinson was in the water, helping the boat tender position the boat over an urchin-collecting site. Robinson, using a scooter, dived to the bottom to check the anchor. He returned shortly to inform his crew that the boat was in a good position. He went to the bottom again to being collecting urchins as his two companions set about their normal dive routine. The tenders were toward the bow of the vessel when they heard Robinson call out, "Hey, hey" from the stern of the boat. Both crewmen turned to see him struggling to pull himself out of the water and onto the dive step. As they approached Robinson, he explained that he had been 'hit' by a white shark. The tenders pulled him quickly out of the water and onto the deck. The observed a three- to four-metre-diameter stain of blood in the water at the stern of the boat, suggesting to the tenders that the diver had been struck below the surface. Neither tender had heard any commotion prior to Robinson's calling out to them.

The diver had been in the water about 15 minutes, but had been submerged only three to four minutes during his second dive before calling out.

INJURY: Fatal. The diver had sustained a single bite to the upper right leg, involving the hip and thigh. The crescent-shaped wound extended onto the anterior surface of the left thigh, terminating at the level of the right knee joint. This arc measured 45 cm at its widest dimension.



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TREATMENT: A make-shift tourniquet, using a belt and a screwdriver, was fashioned and applied to Robinson's right leg. Towels were also applied to the open wound site. Robinson struggled as he talked with his companions for about 15 minutes before losing consciousness. The wounds sustained during the accident — including massive loss of tissue, severance of major vessels and the almost complete amputation of the right leg at the knee — were too severe to be treated effectively at any location other than a hospital's trauma center. At 11h00, a U.S. Coast Guard helicopter arrived with the diver at Goleta Hospital in Goleta. Physician James Jones attempted to revive the patient but he expired at 11h15.

SPECIES INVOLVED: Wound dimensions and interspace measurements were comparable to the dentition of a white shark five to 5.5 metres in length.

CASE INVESTIGATOR: Ralph Collier