

**ACTIVITY:** Snorkeling

**CASE:** GSAF 1997.01.25

**DATE:** Saturday January 25, 1997

**LOCATION:** The incident took place off a chartered yacht off Whitehaven Beach on Whitsunday Island, Queensland, Australia.

**NAME:** Derek Burrows

**DESCRIPTION:** He is a 27-year-old male, an electrical engineer from Melbourne, Victoria. He was on his honeymoon.



*Whitehaven Beach*

**BACKGROUND**

**MOON PHASE:** Full Moon, January 24, 1997

**DISTANCE FROM SHORE:** 100 metres

**TIME:** Sometime between 11h00 and 11h30

**NARRATIVE:** The honeymooners had chartered a boat and had been sailing around the Whitsundays. They anchored off the beach overnight and had gone for a swim. Although it was an isolated beach, boats anchored overnight and there often large numbers of people swimming. When the incident took place number of other people were in the water. Derek was hanging off the boat's anchor chain when the shark latched onto his legs and "wrestled" him.

**INJURY:** He sustained three bites to his lower legs. There were puncture wounds to his right leg, and a 40-centimetre gash to the bone on his left leg.

**TREATMENT:** He was airlifted from Whitehaven Beach to Hamilton Island and on to Makay Base Hospital for surgery. Hospital clinical co-ordinator Dr Bert Sadleir went out with the helicopter retrieval team and treated the victim during the return flight. "He had lost a fair degree of blood and he received some intravenous fluids, said Dr. Sadleir. "He was given morphine for the pain, quite a bit of morphine, about 20mg." They arrived back at the hospital at 13h40. Microsurgery was needed to repair the injuries.

**SPECIES:** Not identified. The shark was 1.8 to 21.1 metres (six feet to seven feet) in length.

**SOURCES:** Sunday Mail (Queensland), January 26, 1997, page 2; Hobart Mercury, January 27, 1997, page 2; The Advertiser, Monday January 27, 1997, page 3.

