

ACTIVITY: Swimming
CASE: GSAF 2000.06.09.b

DATE: Friday June 9, 2000

LOCATION: The attack took place in the Gulf of Mexico just east of the Gulf Shores public beach in Gulf Shores, Baldwin County, Alabama, USA.

87°7 W, 30°3 N



NAME: Richard Watley

DESCRIPTION: The swimmer, a 55-year-old male from Orange Beach, owns a barber shop. He was part of a group training for a triathlon.

BACKGROUND

MOON PHASE: Some 54% of the moon's visible disk was illuminated. First Quarter, June 8, 2000

DISTANCE FROM SHORE: 90 feet

DEPTH OF WATER AT INCIDENT SITE: "Neck deep"

TIME: 06h45

NARRATIVE: Watley was swimming about 90 feet away from the shoreline. When his friend, Charles Anderson (GSAF 2000.08.09.a) was being attacked, he did not know what was happening, but he soon figured it out when the shark came up under him and bit his right thigh and hip. "I looked down and saw him staring me right in the face. I thought, 'I'm going to die,' and then I decided I wasn't going to die without a fight and I hit him," said Watley.

"I thought the shark might leave me alone, but it came at me again and again. I was keeping him away by holding his nose when he would charge me, and every chance I got I hit him. With each charge the shark was pushing me inshore. Whenever the shark would break away, he would make his turn, do a circle, and I would swim as fast as I could, a five to six-second burst and then I'd turn around to see if he was going to charge me again. Each time I turned around, he was there. I mean he was there! He was charging each time. He chased me all the way to shore."

INJURY: Watley sustained puncture wounds to his right hip and right arm.

TREATMENT: He was transported to South Baldwin Regional Medical Center in Foley where his injuries were repaired.

SPECIES INVOLVED: It was thought that a bull shark, *Carcharhinus leucas*, about six feet in length with a mass of 180 pounds was involved in the attack.

NOTE: Police posted red flags and close 30 miles of beaches from Fort Morgan to the Florida state line for the rest of the day while biologists made two flights along the coast

looking for sharks and large concentrations of fish. The beaches reopened the next day, and although the beaches were packed few people ventured into the water.

SOURCES: Orlando Sentinel, June 10, 2000, page A20 & June 11, 2000, page A22.