

ACTIVITY: Sitting on surfboard

CASE: [GSAF 2000.06.10](#)

DATE: Saturday June 10, 2000

LOCATION: The incident took place in the Gulf of Mexico at J.P. Luby Surf Park, Corpus Christi, Nueces County, Texas, USA.

27.8°N, 97.4°W

NAME: Kenny Alexander

DESCRIPTION: The surfer, a 17-year-old male, is 5'11" and weighs 185 pounds.

SURFBOARD: He was using a white surfboard, striped with blue rails.



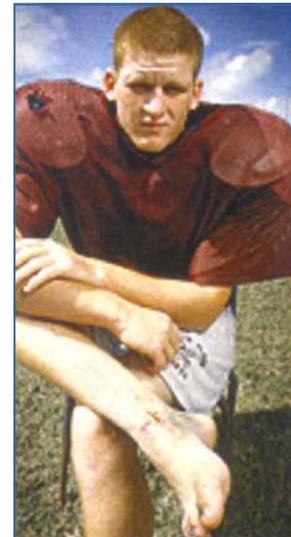
BACKGROUND

WEATHER: A storm was brewing, "which meant waves would be good," said

By 15h51, Corpus Christi recorded thunderstorms and rain. Visibility was six miles [9.7 km], air temperature was 73.9°F [23.3°C], dew point 73°F [22.8°C], humidity 97%, sea level pressure 29.88 inches [1011.9 hPa] and wind direction was South at 13.8 mph [22.2 km/h].

MOON PHASE: Waxing Gibbous, 64% of the Moon's visible disk was illuminated. Full moon, June 16, 2000.

ENVIRONMENT: The surf park has a sand bottom, and at one time it was a destination for Texas surfers due to a surfing pier made especially for the sport to increase wave action, but a hurricane destroyed the pier. (The pier was built for and designated for surfers as it has no deck, only poles.) Surf can be good here, but it is very susceptible to strong currents. On the southern edge of the park is Packery Channel, a small shallow-draft channel that runs from the Laguna Madre (the flats and the Intracoastal Waterway) to the Gulf of Mexico. Many decades ago, the channel dried and filled completely with sand.



Lee Green, a natural resource scientist at the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department in Rockport, said there is no evidence there are more sharks in the water than usual. He said such incidents are accidental encounters. During warmer months the sharks move into the surf zone, an area stretching several miles out from the beach, because of the presence of smaller fish such as mullet. The surf zone is also a natural habitat for sharks to reproduce. "They're in close because there's a lot to feed on in close," Green said.

TIME: Shortly before 16h00

NARRATIVE: Kenny Alexander and his friend, Omar Salinas, are defensive tackles for their high school football team, The Hornets, but when they are off the field both enjoy surfing. They had been in the water a few hours, and had drifted about a half-mile north of the pier at the park. Alexander and Salinas were sitting on their boards, bobbing along with the waves, waiting for the waves to build. "The next thing I know, I felt teeth sinking into my foot," said Alexander. "I shook it a couple of times and it let go." Salinas had his back to his friend when he heard him yell, "Shark! Shark! Get the hell out of the water". Alexander

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paddled to shore without assistance but could not walk when he reached the beach.

INJURY: According to his doctors, the surfer's right foot bore "the perfect impression of a five-inch jaw span" Two tendons were injured: one was severed and the other was torn.

TREATMENT: The surfer underwent two surgical procedures. The first (on the night of the incident) was to clean and debride the wound, the second to repair the tendons was performed a few days later. The surfer made a complete recovery.

SPECIES INVOLVED: It was thought that this incident involved a blacktip shark, *Carcharhinus limbatus*, about 1.2 to 1.8 metres [4' to 6'] in length.

NOTE: Alexander said of his experience, "I don't think it should stop anybody from going out to the beach. It's just so unlikely for people to get attacked by a shark out there."

SOURCE: Lee Goddard, Caller Times, Friday October 6, 2000