

ACTIVITY: Swimming

CASE: **GSAF 2002.04.01**

DATE: Monday April 1, 2002

LOCATION: The incident took place in the Atlantic Ocean off the Commercial Boulevard Pier in Lighthouse Point at Lauderdale-By-The-Sea, Broward County, Florida, USA.

26°11'22"N, 80°5'52"W



NAME: Matthew May

DESCRIPTION: The swimmer, a 29-year-old male, is a swim coach from Coldwater, Ohio. He was visiting Florida with a group of children for a swimming tournament at the International Swimming Hall of Fame.

BACKGROUND

MOON PHASE: Full Moon, March 28, 2002. Last Quarter, April 4, 2002.

ENVIRONMENT: The pier was initially built in 1941 by the city's founding father and first mayor. It has been rebuilt three times since. Today, it extends 800 feet into the Atlantic Ocean and is near a coral reef approximately halfway out, acknowledged as the closest reef to the shoreline in the continental United States.

DEPTH OF WATER: Chest-deep

TIME: 11h30

NARRATIVE: May was standing in the water. "I thought at first it was probably a jellyfish," May said. "Then I saw there was blood in the water and blood running down my arm, and I realized it was serious."

INJURY: The swimmer's upper left arm was bitten twice.

FIRST AID: May tried to drive to the hospital with friends but had to stop and call for help. Fire rescue workers found May near 6th St. and Commercial Boulevard in Oakland Park and took him to North Ridge Medical Center.

TREATMENT: At the hospital, the wound was closed with 11 stitches and he was released. However, doctors said that he may need additional surgery and possibly a skin graft.

SPECIES INVOLVED: Not identified. Although May said he didn't get a good look at the fish, he thought it was about three feet in length.

NOTE: Just before the incident May joked to friends that he had a "better chance of winning the lottery than getting bitten by a shark." Now, he says, he is going to buy a lottery ticket.

SOURCES: Orlando Sentinel, April 2, 2002, page B.3, Florida Today, April 2, 2002; Miami Herald, April 2, 2002.