

ACTIVITY: Surfing
CASE: [GSAF 2002.05.21.R](#)
DATE: Reported May 21, 2002
LOCATION: The incident took place at Playa Grande, Costa Rica.

NAME: Nick Wallace
DESCRIPTION: He is an Australian pro surfer.

BACKGROUND

MOON PHASE: First Quarter, May 19, 2002

ENVIRONMENT: Playa Grande ("Big Beach") is three miles long and has one of the most consistent waves in Central America. It's a fast, barreling beach break with offshore winds most of the year. It is also a National Park created to protect endangered leatherback turtles.



NARRATIVE: Wallace was in the country for the Quiksilver Airshow at Playa Hermosa. After the event he headed north for an extended surf vacation at the Playa Grande Inn. "On the day of the attack, it was about 4 feet, offshore and barreling," says Wallace. "I had been out about 20 minutes and had a bunch of good waves -- it was paradise. But then out of nowhere I was hit by what felt like a US missile heading for Bin fricken' Laden. I saw a flash of black as it slammed into me and bit into my board. The tail whipped around and created a huge splash.

"At the time, I thought it was a crocodile since Costa Rica is so known for those," Wallace said. "It didn't knock me off my board, but it forced me up about a foot and then vanished. I turned to my buddy, Pat Bollinger, and said, 'Did you see that? Something just tried to kill me!' But he just thought I was freaking out over a jellyfish or something so he paddled off after another wave."

Wallace headed to shore to inspect his board.

INJURY: "I wasn't bitten but the little f--ker's pointy nose drove right into my thigh and gave me the worst dead-leg," says Wallace. "I had a huge bruise, but I'm proud of it."

DAMAGE TO EQUIPMENT: There was a well-defined row of tooth-marks around the rail of the surfboard just above the fins. His swim trunks also had a few tooth-marks, but fortunately, the shark only bit into fabric and epoxy.

SPECIES INVOLVED: Local fisherman inspected Wallace's board and decided the incident probably involved a six- to seven-foot bull shark, *Carcharhinus leucas*.

SOURCE: Surfline.com