

**ACTIVITY:** Surfing

**CASE:** [GSAF 2002.09.21.a](#)

**DATE:** Saturday September 21, 2002

**LOCATION:** The incident took place in the Pacific Ocean at Moonstone Beach, Trinidad, Humboldt County, California, USA.

**NAME:** Reed Richards

**DESCRIPTION:** The surfer is a 35-year-old male from McKinleyville. He has been surfing for about 30 years.

**SURFBOARD:** The surfer was using a six-foot board

### **BACKGROUND**

**MOON PHASE:** Full Moon, September 21, 2002

**DISTANCE FROM SHORE:** "Just outside the breakers"

**DEPTH OF WATER AT INCIDENT SITE:** Eight feet

**TIME:** Early morning

**NARRATIVE:** Richards, was straddling his board when he said he felt a tremendous force on his leg and immediately slid to the rear of his board. A shark about was crunching into the front of his surfboard from the side, holding it, and violently thrashing up and down three times. "It was just clamped down like a pit bull," Richards said. "I was literally going all the way up (out of the water) and all the way down like it was a rodeo ride." His friend James Harkins was nearby and saw much of the attack. "You could see that his leg was against the shark the whole time," Harkins said, "The shark was right in his lap." Richards thinks he hit the shark on the head as hard as he could and it then rolled away, releasing the surfboard and tilting him off the board. He saw the shark shaking its head and appearing to turn back in his direction from about 10 feet away. He headed for his board, which was on a leash. "I swam as fast as I could and thought at any moment he was going to hit me hard from below, but I managed to catch a little wave," Richards said. Other surfers left the water at once.

**INJURY:** None.



SHAWN WALKER/THE TIMES-STANDARD

**Reed Richards of McKinleyville explains how a great white shark clamped down on his surfboard and thrashed it up and down while he was still on it at Moonstone Beach about 15 miles north of Eureka on Sept. 21, 2002. Richards was not injured, but the shark left a 16-inch bite mark.**

**SPECIES:** According to the surfer, the incident involved a white shark ten to 12 feet in length [3 to 3.7 metres] in length, with a head about three feet wide.

**CASE INVESTIGATOR:** Ralph Collier