

ACTIVITY: Surfing

CASE: [GSAF 2004.04.07](#)

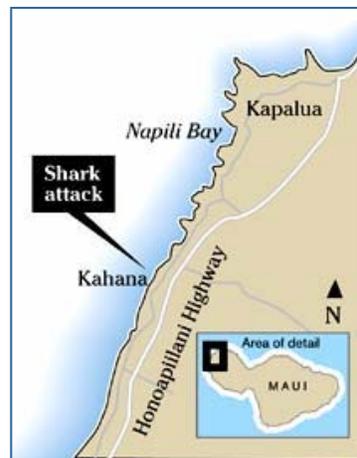
DATE: Wednesday April 7, 2004

LOCATION: The attack took place at a popular surf spot known as S-turns off Kahana Beach, on the western shoreline of Maui, Hawaii, USA.

NAME: Willis McInnis

DESCRIPTION: The surfer, a 57-year-old male, was 6 feet tall and weighed about 175 pounds. He was a member of the Hui O Pohaku Park surf club.

SURFBOARD: He was riding a 10-foot [3 m] surfboard.



BACKGROUND

WEATHER: At 06h54 the sky was clear, visibility was 10 miles [16.1 kilometers], air temperature was 64.9°F [18.3°C], dew point was 63°F [17.2°C], humidity was 93%; sea level pressure was 30.02 inches [1016.4 hPa], and wind direction was SSE at 6.9 mph [11.1 km/h].

MOON PHASE: Waning Gibbous, 94% of the moon was illuminated.

SEA CONDITIONS: Surf was reported to be about 4-foot-high off Kahana and the water was murky.

ENVIRONMENT: According to one press report, the incident took place near a drainage channel.

DISTANCE FROM SHORE: 200 to 300 yards [180 m to 275 m] off Kahana beach

DEPTH OF WATER AT INCIDENT SITE: 10- to 15-feet

TIME: 07h00

NARRATIVE: Willis McInnis, Tina Cooper and Rodger Coombs were usually the "early birds" at the surf spot. McInnis went in the water first and had caught at least two waves when Cooper and Coombs paddled out to join him. "We were watching him; he missed catching a wave and turned back out," said Cooper. "I caught one wave, got off a wave and turned around to paddle back out." Then she realized that that McInnis was in trouble.

"I heard him yelling, 'Help! Help me!'" said Coombs. He estimated that he was about 100 yards away from McInnis, who was lying on top of his surfboard

"Rodger and I paddled towards Will," said Cooper. "Will was alive. He was talking. He was holding onto his board with his hands." Both surfers saw the injury and realized that McInnis was losing massive amounts of blood. "[McInnis] said, 'My leg is toast,'" Coombs recalled.

Cooper paddled in to get her cell phone and called for help. Coombs kept encouraging McInnis during the 10 to 15 minutes it took to get him to shore. Coombs got off his board and began pushing McInnis in to shore, telling him, "We're going to make it. Just stay with me. We're almost there." He said McInnis was conscious most of the way to shore, although he clearly was in, or going into, shock. Bystanders and friends helped bring McInnis to shore.

INJURY: According to Dr. Anthony Manoukian, Maui County coroner's physician, McInnis

appeared to have been bitten while his leg was vertical in the water, possibly while he was trying to get on his surfboard or had his leg dangling in the water.

McInnis suffered severe tissue loss to the posterior of his upper right thigh and midcalf. Wounds from two bites, including one on the mid-leg near the calf, were superimposed. It appears the shark bit first near the calf, then bit through the mid-thigh, severing the femoral artery. The two wounds measured 13.5" in diameter, and both bites left tooth marks on the bone. There were also defense wounds (tooth marks and lacerations) on the surfer's right hand, indicating that he tried to hit the shark. Despite all efforts of bystanders, paramedics and police, the surfer died on the beach as the result of extensive blood loss.

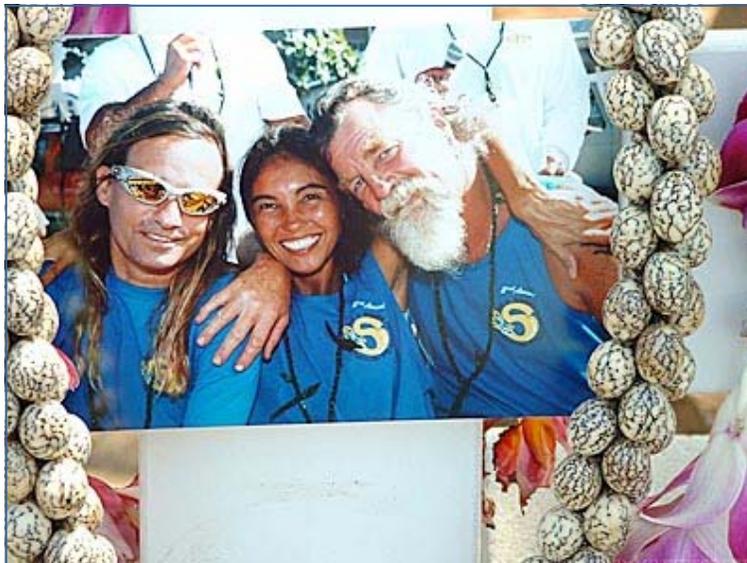
DAMAGE TO EQUIPMENT: Unknown

FIRST AID: When the group brought McInnis to shore, a group of bystanders was waiting to help. One of them, Jeffrey Woznicki, a fire captain vacationing from Milwaukee, reported that McInnis was unconscious, still breathing, but very pale. When the surfer suffered cardiac arrest, Woznicki performed cardiopulmonary resuscitation, but said it didn't seem to work. "You've got to have blood pressure for CPR to work," he said. "You try anyway." Paramedics arrived shortly after McInnis had been taken to shore.

SPECIES INVOLVED: Randy Honebrink, a spokesman for the state's Shark Task Force said, "It was a fairly large shark. Most likely the species responsible is a tiger shark, *Galeocerdo cuvier*. A lot of them are there."

COMMENT: State officials and Maui County lifeguards posted shark warning signs and closed a two-mile stretch of beach from Honokowai Park to Little Makaha near Napili Bay. Lifeguards on personal watercraft patrolled the ocean Wednesday but didn't see any sharks, said Archie Kalepa, Maui County ocean safety supervisor. He said lifeguards helped state conservation enforcement officers put up warning signs after the fatal attack.

REPORTED BY: Lila Fujimoto, Brian Perry & Melissa Tanji, Maui News



This photo of Willis "Will" McInnis, at right, and his friends was left at a memorial in Pohaku Park.

NOTE: A study on Risk Analysis showed that a person's chances of being killed by a shark in any given year are about 1 in 300 million, compared with a 1 in 7,100 chance of being killed in a car accident. In other words, a person would have to swim in the ocean 112 times a day for it to become as dangerous as making a single car journey to the supermarket.

What's the risk?
Average annual estimates of the risk of death for the U.S. population.
Individual risks vary.

Heart disease 1 in 430	Suicide 1 in 9,000	Falls 1 in 20,000
Cancer (all forms) 1 in 550	Murder 1 in 13,500	On the job 1 in 48,000
Skin cancer from sun 1 in 4,200	Crash, motor vehicle 1 in 7,100	Accidental electrocution: 1 in 300,000
Flu 1 in 8,300	Crash, commercia aircraft 1 in 3.1 million	Lightning 1 in 3 million
West Nile virus 1 in 30,400		Shark attack 1 in 300 million

Sources: Risk! A Practical Guide to What's Really Safe and What's Really Dangerous in the World Around You (Houghton Mifflin 2002) and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

SOURCE: http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/review/review_fall_04/risk_perspective.html

See also:

http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/1273/2013/06/content/uploads/sites/1273/2013/06/RISK_IN_PERSP_JUNE2003.pdf