

ACTIVITY: Standing

CASE: [GSAF 2006.07.17](#)

DATE: Monday July 17, 2006

LOCATION: The incident took place in the Atlantic Ocean at Singleton Beach (off Singleton Road) on Hilton Head Island, Beaufort County, South Carolina, USA.

32.2°N, 80.8°W

NAME: Dallas Jackson

DESCRIPTION: He is a 49-year-old male on vacation from Sylvania, Ohio. He is 5'8", 160 lbs, and was wearing cream-colored swim trunks with blue boat designs, and a necklace with a pendant. He had no injuries before entering the water. Jackson, the assistant superintendent of Sylvania schools, has been vacationing on Hilton Head for about 15 years and has a condo at Crabline Court.

BACKGROUND

WEATHER: At 09h54, the weather station at Hilton Head recorded a partly cloudy sky, no rain, and visibility of seven miles [11.3 kilometers). The air temperature was 84.2°F [29°C], dew point 77°F [25°C], 79% humidity; sea level pressure 30.05 inches [1017.5 hPa], and wind direction was NNE at 6.9 mph [11.1 km/h].

MOON PHASE: Waning Gibbous, 53% of the moon was illuminated.

SEA CONDITIONS: Water temperature was about 85°F. The sea was calm, but murky and grey with less than 12 inches underwater visibility. Jackson believes mean high tide took place about 10h00.

ENVIRONMENT: Singleton Beach is buffered from the town's main thoroughfare by unexploited natural parklands with an open salt marsh fed by tidal streams. During the previous week, lifeguards cleared the water near Coligny and South Forest beaches for about an hour after two sharks were spotted following bait fish about 100 to 200 feet offshore. The beach has no lifeguards. There were no rocks or piers in the area. No one was fishing in the immediate vicinity and no dolphins had been sighted. Seagulls were observed diving a week prior to this incident and on Sunday, the day before the incident pelicans were observed flying very low, and diving close to shore in the area.

Dallas Jackson and his family were very close to a channel, running from the beach towards



Dallas Jackson

E. Voight, The Toledo Blade



the ocean. The channel was approximately 50 feet wide, and two feet deeper than the surrounding area. Jackson was approximately 25-50 yards from the channel when he was bitten.

DISTANCE FROM SHORE:

DEPTH OF WATER: Waist-deep [3.5 to four feet]

TIME: 10h00

NARRATIVE: Less than 12 people were on the beach. Dallas Jackson and his family were the only people in the ocean. He had been in the water for 15 to 20 minutes and was about 100 yards from where he initially entered the sea, and 25 to 50 yards from the channel. He was standing flat-footed in the water, facing shorewards, watching his wife and his eight-year-old son boogie boarding just 10 feet from him. [Both boogie boards had blue undersurfaces, and the upper surfaces were white with blue markings.]

"I felt something hit my leg from behind pretty hard," he said. "It felt like something hitting me with a baseball bat, then it gave a tug. The first thing I thought was shark — the jaws of the shark basically surrounded my foot." At the same time the fish clamped down on his right foot, he pulled his leg back slightly. "I started screaming [to his wife and son], 'Get out of the water,'" he said. Jackson bolted to the beach. "I realized while I'm running that my foot must still be here," Jackson recalled.

INJURY: Jackson was bitten on the right foot and ankle, sustaining teeth marks (lacerations) resulting in an avulsion injury above the ankle and about 13 puncture wounds in rows on the bottom of his foot. No tissue was removed.

FIRST AID: On the beach Jackson saw blood and skin flap (avulsion injury) on his leg

above his ankle. First aid was administered by his wife, a nurse. She washed the wounds with bottled water then wrapped them in a beach towel. Before going to the hospital, the Jackson family stopped at their condo where Dallas again washed the wounds, and wrapped them in a clean towel. His relatives helped him to their car. His family called 911 to get directions to the hospital. They arrived at the hospital about 10 minutes after the incident.

TREATMENT: At Hilton Head Regional Medical Center [5 Hospital Center Blvd, Hilton Head, SC 29926] Jackson reported there was some pain with the initial bite; however, more pain intense pain was experienced at the hospital — when hospital staff was cleaning the wounds. Jackson's wounds were repaired with about a dozen stitches by Dr. Michael Kaup. {Dr. Michael Kaup (843) 689-8281}. Dr. Kaup is also the same doctor who treated seven-year-old Megan Wallis, bitten by a shark on June 7, 2006 at Coligny Beach. Jackson was treated and released the same day. He was advised by Dr. Kaup to stay out of the water until after he returns home to Ohio on Saturday [July 17, 2006].

SPECIES: Dallas says a paramedic told him it looks like a five-foot shark bit him. Dallas said, in an interview with Clay Creswell, that when the shark clamped onto his foot, it felt as if the fish had a lot of weight to it. During the interview, Dallas said he believes “the shark was probably chasing a school of fish, ran across him, and decided to find out what he was. Or maybe the shark made a mistake, and thought his foot was a fish.”

“After reviewing the photos of the Dallas Jackson incident, I have no clue as to which species of shark indigenous to that area might have bitten him. The wounds are very small, indicating either a small shark, maybe four feet in length, or a larger sandtiger. The numerous punctures to the side of the foot are indicative of the dentition of a sandtiger, but I was not aware that they were that aggressive under normal conditions. Is there anything in this case that might suggest a passive animal like a sandtiger might have been provoked to attack? Sorry I couldn't be of any assistance on this one.” ...*Ralph Collier*

“I think this incident involved an angel shark, *Squatina dumeril*. At first I thought that a small sandtiger could have done it too because of the very narrow and pointed (imprint radius) of lower wound but it just does not fit, based Jackson's description and the way the wound looks. Jackson must have stepped back (the heel was lifted at the time he was bitten). The motivation of the animal was likely a “stress/defense” bite which suggests an animal that was laying/buried in the sand. The size of the wound suggests the jaw of an angel shark about 100 - 120 cm in length.” *Erich Ritter, Ph.D.*

“Initially I thought of a small sandtiger shark too, but some things about the bite just didn't fit. What Erich says makes sense. Angel sharks are found in South Carolina waters where they move inshore during spring and summer. Most of the time they lie buried in the sand, and are ambush predators with an attitude, and they have very sharp grasping teeth.”
...*Marie Levine*

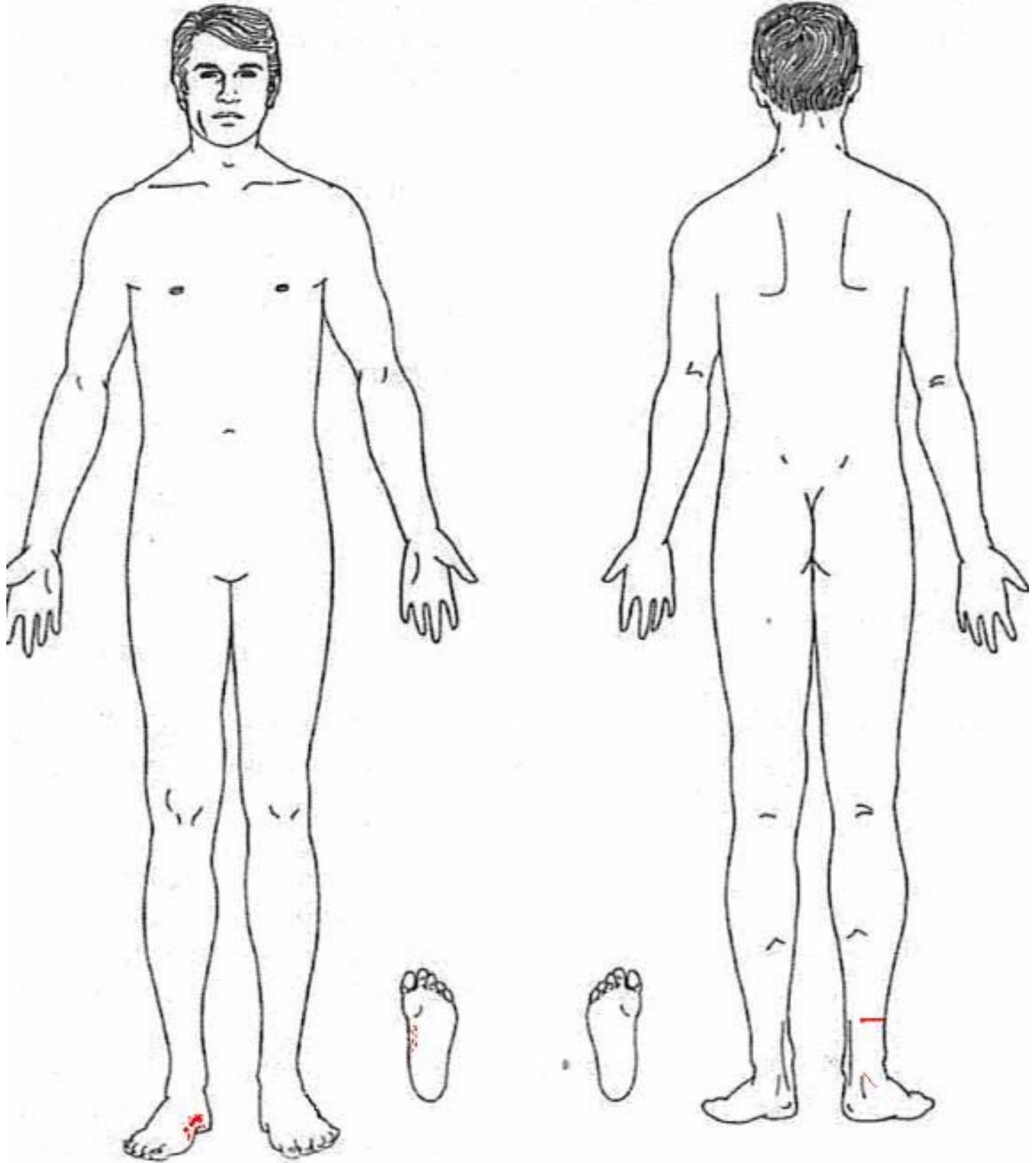
“Bingo....I think you hit it on the head. He stepped on the angel shark and it bit him in self defense, which happens frequently here along the Pacific Coast with divers disturbing them. I was not aware that angel sharks were indigenous to that area along the eastern seaboard. Good call.”...*Ralph Collier*



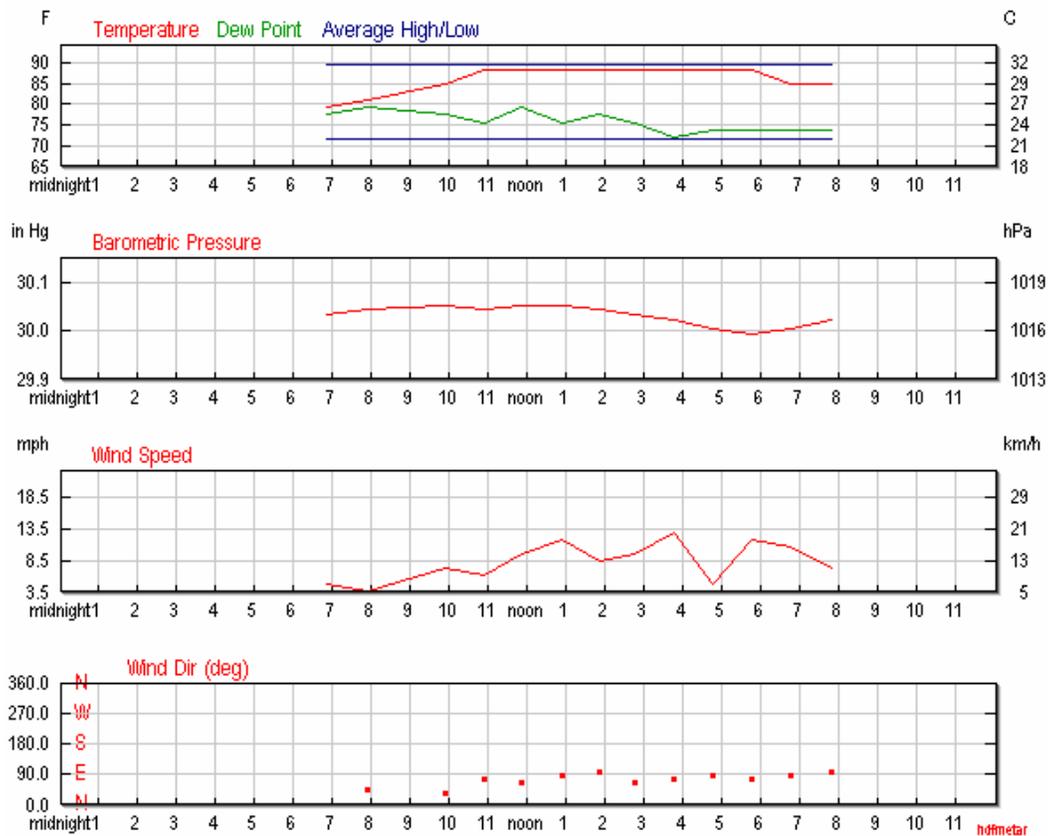
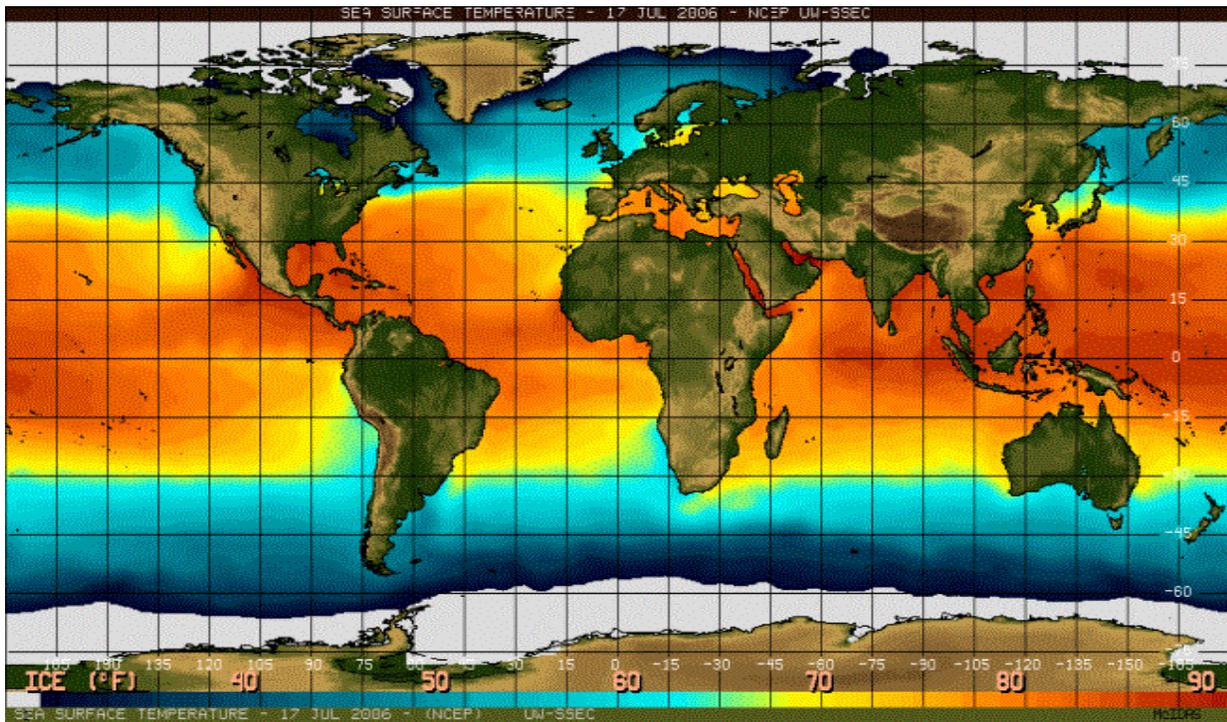
Jaw of an angel shark

SOURCES: Reported by Peter Immerz, <http://www.sharkproject.org>; Michelle Paynter, mpaynter@wtoc.com, July 20, 2006, <http://www.wtoctv.com/Global/story.asp?S=5178721>, and Ginny Skalski, The Island Packet, July 21, 2006; Ralph Wagner, director of Shore Beach Service, which provides lifeguard services for the Town of Hilton Head Island, said he will report the incident to the Shark Research Institute, which maintains the Global Shark Attack File.

CASE INVESTIGATOR: Clay Creswell, Global Shark Accident File



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Meteorological data for Hilton Head Island, July 17, 2006 from weatherunderground.com