

**ACTIVITY:** Surfing

**CASE:** [GSAF 2007.09.16.a](#)

**DATE:** Sunday September 16, 2007

**LOCATION:** The incident took place in the Atlantic Ocean off North 12th Street, Flagler Beach, Flagler County, Florida, USA.  
29.4°N, 81.1°W

**NAME:** Jessica Riley

**DESCRIPTION:** Teen

### BACKGROUND

**WEATHER.** There were thunderstorms during the afternoon. By 11h50, nearby Ormond Beach recorded mostly cloudy skies and visibility of seven miles. Air temperature was 75.2°F [24°C], dew point 75.2°F [24°C], humidity 100%, sea level pressure 29.93 inches [1013.4 hPa], and wind direction was North at 5.8 mph [9.3 km/h].

**MOON PHASE:** New Moon, September 11, 2007; First Quarter, September 19, 2007

**TIME:** Early morning.

**NARRATIVE:** Jessica Riley planned to stay in bed that morning and catch a few more winks, but she kept picturing the six- to eight-foot swells she had heard about all week. She skipped church and instead decided to “surf the sunrise.” When she reached the beach at 07h30, the beach, the water was flat and she lay on her surfboard, seaward of the breakers, falling asleep.

“That’s when I heard a splash nearby, and I was nowhere near any waves,” she said.

Moments later the shark bit her surfboard. “As soon as it bites in, I, like, fall in, fall right onto the shark. Like, I started to kick, just kneed the shark right under its mouth, kind of. And my finger found its eyeball and, like, it went it. And as soon as I realized it was his eyeball, I shoved it in more,” she said. She yelled for help twice, and, after the second time, after she kicked her leg up, the shark pulled her under. It grabbed her surfboard leash instead of her leg. And Riley says she’s not positive, but thinks the shark severed the leash, because the surfboard floated 10 to 15 feet away. She pulled off the part of the leash still attached to her and dog-paddled to the board, picturing a shredded ankle. She climbed onto her board and paddled as fast as she could to shore, scared but uninjured.

Lifeguards kept watch on the beach after the incident, but after two hours without any sign of a shark, they opened the beach.



*Jessica Riley and her surfboard*

**INJURY:** The surfer was not injured, but her surfboard was damaged.

**SURFBOARD:** Lifeguard Lt. Scott Lanigan said he found the chomped off piece of her board about an hour after the incident. "The piece was about 20 yards out in the water," he said. According to Lanigan, the fragment of the surfboard contained tooth impressions of the shark.

**SPECIES:** Not identified. According to the teen, the shark was 9.5 feet in length. Locals speculated that the incident may have involved a bull shark, *C. leucas*.

**SOURCE:** <http://www.wsbtv.com/news/14158134/detail.html?rss=atl&psp=news>

