

ACTIVITY: Floating

CASE: [GSAF 2011.08.16.b](#)

DATE: Tuesday August 16, 2011

LOCATION: The accident took place in Mosquito Bay, Isla Vieques, Puerto Rico, USA.

NAME: Lydia Strunk

DESCRIPTION: She is a 27-year-old female, a former vice president of the US chapter of Amnesty International. She was wearing a life jacket.

BACKGROUND

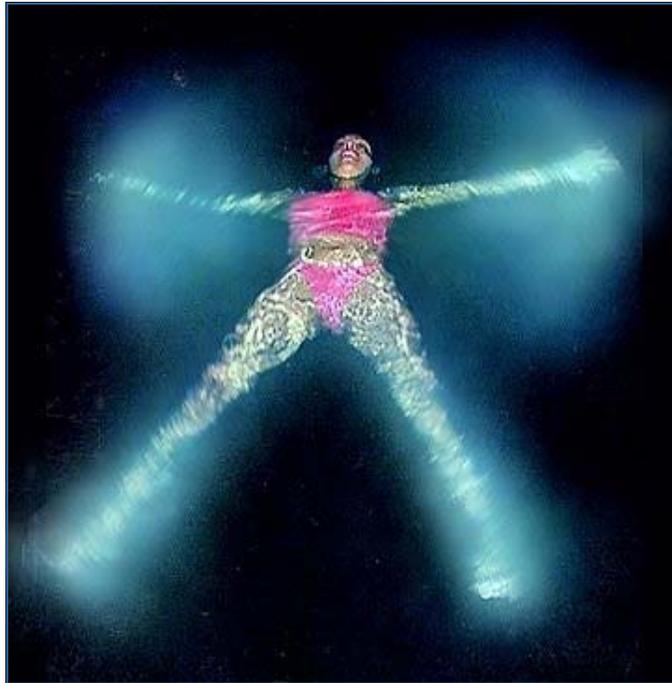
MOON PHASE: Waning Gibbous, 92% of the Moon was illuminated.

ENVIRONMENT: Puerto Mosquito, better known as Bioluminescent Bay, may offer the world's largest and brightest display of bioluminescence. The dinoflagellates in the bay create glowing neon blue light when the water around them is disturbed. Normally they appear in small numbers but in a few locations throughout the world they appear in sufficient concentration that the effect is stunning!

A combination of factors creates the necessary conditions for these dinoflagellates to thrive, including the red mangrove trees and lack of development around the bay. The water is the bay cool and deep enough for the tiny organisms, and a small channel to the ocean confines them to the bay.

TIME: Night

NARRATIVE: Lydia Strunk set out on an 18-person excursion in nine tandem kayaks in Mosquito Bay off the island of Vieques. Although it is illegal to swim in the bay, it is common practice. She and nine others jumped into the water and swam in a relatively confined area for about 10 minutes. A moment before she was bitten, the shark bumped the leg of a male acquaintance swimming next to her. Seconds later Strunk felt a strong impact and was pulled beneath the surface of the water. She surfaced and pulled herself into a kayak,



and the other swimmers exited the water.

INJURY: The bite was approximate 25 centimeters (10 inches) in length on the posterior right leg. It extended from the ankle to below the knee. Four tendons of the right foot were also damaged.

FIRST AID / TREATMENT: The tour guide wrapped her leg in a tourniquet, and she was taken to a local clinic. Then she was airlifted to San Juan's Puerto Rico Medical Center where she was admitted and underwent emergency surgery. Doctors said Strunk is expected to make a full recovery but will likely have some nerve damage and limited movement in her right foot, Doctors repaired four tendons that are used for flexing the foot, and it will take up to five months for Strunk's damaged nerves to grow back.

SPECIES: It was thought that the accident involved a juvenile tiger shark. Shark accidents are rare in Puerto Rico. Only seven such accidents have been reported, two of them fatal, with the last death occurring in 1924.

SOURCES:

Danica Coto, Chron, August 18, 2011, <http://www.chron.com/disp/story.mpl/ap/latinamerica/7703604.html>

Sign On San Diego, September 2, 2011,
<http://www.signonsandiego.com/news/2011/sep/02/shark-attack-survivor-describes-ordeal-puerto-rico/>



*Lydia Strunk recuperating in her Ocean Beach home
Photo by Charlie Neuman*