



ACTIVITY: Spearfishing

CASE [GSAF 1984.07.22 / SA-330](#)

DATE Sunday July 22, 1984

LOCATION: The incident took place between Bellows and Anvil Rocks off Cape Point, Western Cape Province, South Africa.

NAME: Adrian Hayman

BACKGROUND

WEATHER: The sky was sunny and there was no wind.

MOON PHASE: July 21, 1984, Third Quarter

SEA CONDITIONS: Conditions were excellent for the competition. Water visibility ranged from six to nine metres, the sea was warm and there was a 1,5 to two-metre swell with very little surge.

ENVIRONMENT: No seals were seen but many fish were in the area; red Roman, *Chrysolephus laticeps*, ranging in size from 3,9 to 4,1 kilograms each, were being shot.

TIME: Between 11h00 and 12h00

NARRATIVE: The incident took place during a USA/SA spearfishing competition during which 26 divers were in the water. At 11h00 three seasoned spearfishermen, Tommy Botha, Kurt John Pretorius and Adrian Hayman, entered the sea. Pretorius and Hayman spoke after the first dive. Both men had shot fish. Hayman placed his catch on his stringer but Pretorius returned to the support boat with his fish and thus lost contact with Hayman.

The divers realized Hayman was missing at 12h00 when they called for the boat to pick

them up. Hayman's float was visible and the divers followed his line to the bottom. They found the spear from his gun had been shot into redbait at an angle. Botha borrowed a scuba rig from another boat and conducted a search of the sea bottom but found no trace of the missing diver.

Could Hayman have been attacked by a shark? Did he fire his gun at an attacker and miss, or did he reflexively pull the trigger of his speargun when bitten? A shark could have carried the body beyond the vicinity of the search. Divers also speculated that he may have shot at a fish, missed, and his spear penetrated the redbait. While attempting to free his spear he may have lost consciousness and drowned. In that case, divers argued, his heavy weight belt should have kept his body in the immediate area yet Botha, an experienced salvage diver, conducted a thorough search of the area and failed to find the body.

However, there was a slight current; by the time it was realized that the diver was missing and Botha began the search, Hayman's body could have drifted beyond the search area and a lone diver could easily have missed finding the body. It is probable that Hayman stayed too long underwater, suffered shallow water blackout and consequently drowned.

On August 21, 1984 the diver's body, still clothed in a wetsuit and competition T-shirt, drifted ashore at Cape Point and was taken to the Goot Mortuary. Shark/s had scavenged on the body, but identification was confirmed by the presence of a metal plate and old fracture of the left arm. An inquest was held and the court ruled the diver suffered "death by drowning".

CASE INVESTIGATORS: Pieter Landsberg, M.D., Marie Levine