

**ACTIVITY:** SCUBA diving  
**CASE:** GSAF 1990.06.24 / SA-386  
**DATE:** Sunday June 24, 1990

**LOCATION:** The attack took place in the Indian Ocean at Mossel Bay, 400 metres south of the Hartenbos River mouth, and a kilometre north of Seal Island. Hartenbos is seven kilometres north of the city of Mossel Bay in the Western Cape Province, South Africa.  
34°07'S, 22°07,8'E

**NAME:** Monique Price

**DESCRIPTION:** The diver, a 21-year-old female, was 1,58 metres tall, and weighed 65 kilograms. She was wearing a black and blue five-millimetre full wetsuit with hood, black buoyancy compensator, yellow dive tank, a weight-belt, and green fins. She had no injuries prior to the attack, and was not menstruating. An experienced diver, she worked on the Mossgas Project.

**BOAT:** The divers' support boat was the 5,5-metre white-hulled ski-boat, *Hunter*, skippered by Hennie Terreblanche. The boat was powered by two 115-hp Yamaha engines.

## BACKGROUND

**WEATHER:** It was a warm (19°C) sunny day, and there was a light north-westerly breeze.

**MOON PHASE:** Waxing Crescent, 4% of the moon was illuminated. New Moon, June 22, 1990

**SEA CONDITIONS:** The sea was calm, height of the swells was less than a metre, and it was a spring tide. Underwater visibility was between 2,5 and three metres, and the water temperature was 18°C.

**ENVIRONMENT:** From June to November each year, southern right whales come into Mossel Bay to calve. Heaviside's dolphins, common dolphins, dusky dolphins and bottlenose dolphins are present in the bay throughout the year. Seal Island, in the middle of the bay, is inhabited by colonies of jackass penguins and Cape fur seals. The attack occurred on an extensive reef off the Super Tubes amusement centre, and the group had observed seals about two kilometres from the incident site.

**DISTANCE FROM SHORE:** 500 metres

**DISTANCE FROM BOAT:** Five metres



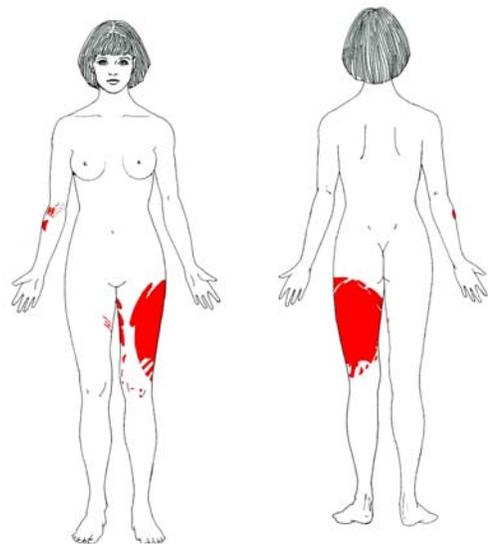
Seal Island, Mossel Bay

**DEPTH:** 12 metres

**TIME:** 15h45

**NARRATIVE:** Monique Price, her fiancé 25-year-old Francois Swanepoel, and a third diver, 24-year-old Graham Nel, were attempting to recover an anchor lost three weeks previously from Terreblanche's ski-boat during a fishing competition. The divers entered the water using backward rolls; Nel was the first in the water, followed by Price and Swanepoel. The divers were on the surface, swimming towards the shotline before starting their descent. Price was three metres behind Nel and eight metres ahead of Swanepoel, facing seawards and hanging vertically in the water, when the shark approached from below and seized her left thigh. The shark's head cleared the water as it submerged with the diver in its jaws. Seconds later she surfaced, screaming. Terreblanche started the outboard motors, moved the boat alongside the divers. Nel scrambled on board as Swanepoel removed Price's weight belt and tank, and he handed her to Terreblanche and Nel.

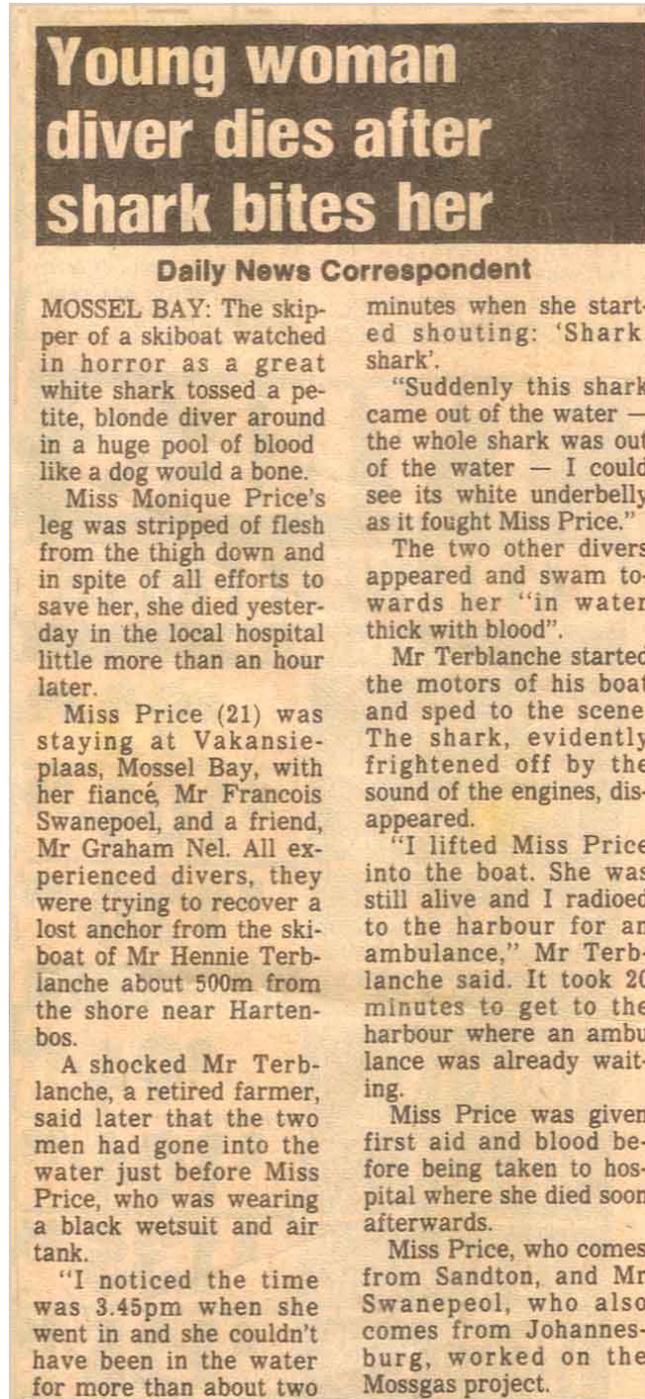
**INJURY:** The diver sustained a single massive wound on her left leg. Both the femoral and popliteal artery were severed. Approximately 25-centimetres of her thigh (50 percent of the thigh tissue) had been removed to the femur, most of it taken from the lateral region. The edges of the wound adjacent to the buttocks and groin were clean cut; by contrast, the edges of the wound in the region of the patella (knee) and in the medial aspect of the thigh were ragged. There were several one-centimetre punctures and small superficial lacerations around the patella which measured 1 cm x 2 cm, and 1 cm x 3 cm, and a single scratch and slight contusion on the medial aspect of the right thigh. Her right forearm was abraded and there was a one-centimetre x one-centimetre x three-centimetre laceration.



**FIRST AID / TREATMENT:** On board the ski-boat, Swanepoel used a weight-belt as a tourniquet, and cut away sections of her wetsuit to relieve constriction when she complained that she could not breathe. The diver slipped in and out of consciousness, and little blood was shed on the boat, which indicates that the diver had suffered severe blood loss while she was in the water. As soon as the diver was onboard, Terreblanche radioed the lighthouse at Mossel Bay and requested that an ambulance meet them at the yacht club. Twenty minutes later, when the ski-boat reached Mossel Bay Yacht Club (five kilometres from the attack site), the diver was conscious but extremely pale. Paramedic John Fish boarded the boat at the yacht club and administered oxygen, gave the diver fluids (Plasmalyte-B) intravenously, and dressed the wound. She was placed on board the ambulance and reached Mossel Bay 25 minutes later. On arrival at the hospital she was in cardiac and pulmonary arrest: she had no blood pressure or pulse and she was not breathing. Her pupils were dilated and fixed, and all bleeding had ceased. Nevertheless slight electrical activity was recorded and efforts at resuscitation continued. She died of hypovolemic shock as the result of loss of blood at 17h30.

**SPECIES INVOLVED:** According to witnesses the attack involved a four to five-metre white shark, *Carcharodon carcharias*

**CASE INVESTIGATOR:** Jeremy Cliff, Natal Sharks Board



# Shark kills woman

By Deborah Fine

A 21-year-old Mossel Bay woman died yesterday afternoon after she was attacked by a three metre Great White shark while skin-diving at Hartenbos near Mossel Bay.

Captain Neill Calitz, station commander for the Mossel Bay police station, said last night that Miss Monique Price, originally from Johannesburg, died of shock and a loss of blood at the Mossel Bay Hospital at about 5.30 pm.

Miss Price's left upper thigh was apparently savaged by the Great White shark while she was diving 500 metres from the shore in water 12 metres deep at about 3.45 pm.

Miss Price, who was employed by a Mossel

Bay company, went out on a boat, the Hunter, with its skipper, Mr Hennie Terblanche, her fiancé, Mr Francois Swanepoel, and another diver, Mr Graham Nel, to recover an anchor which had been lost three weeks previously.

Miss Price was in the water with Mr Swanepoel and Mr Nel when the shark attacked her 70 m from the boat.

Realising Miss Price had been bitten, Mr Terblanche started the boat's engine and drove

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## Killed by shark

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towards the shark, which had its jaws clamped firmly on her leg.

The shark let go of Miss Price's leg, enabling Mr Swanepoel and Mr Nel to push her into the boat.

Mr Terblanche radioed an emergency message to the lighthouse at Mossel Bay, from where a waiting ambulance was called to rush Miss Price from the Mossel Bay Yacht Club to the hospital, where she later died, said major Calitz.

Miss Price's father, Mr Geoff Price, of Summer Place, Fourways, Johannesburg, said last night that he was "tying up loose ends" and would prefer to speak to the Press at a later stage.

This is the second shark attack at Mossel Bay in the past nine months.

Mr Nico van Broemsen was badly bitten by a Great White shark in September last year while he was surfing off the Mossel Bay coast.