

ACTIVITY: Swimming

CASE: GSAF 2002.12.16

DATE: Monday December 16, 2002

LOCATION: The attack took place in Lake Heron, one of the Miami Lakes, Queensland, Australia.



NAME: Beau Martin

DESCRIPTION: The swimmer was a 23-year-old male. He was a strong swimmer and an exceptional young man: a doctor of philosophy, youth ambassador and humanitarian.

BACKGROUND

MOON PHASE: First Quarter, December 12, 2002. Full Moon, December 20, 2002.

ENVIRONMENT: The Gold Coast has a network of waterways made up of five main rivers, numerous creeks, lakes. The waterways consist of 480 kilometres of rivers and streams, and 774 hectares of dams, canals and lakes. Queensland Boating and Fisheries Patrol Gold Coast district manager Wayne Docherty said canals were home to “significant numbers” of one-metre to two-metre bronze whaler sharks and bull sharks which come there to breed. People are warned against swimming in lakes and canals, especially at night, he said, and Beau had broken cardinal rules for avoiding a shark attack.

TIME: 02h30

NARRATIVE: Beau Martin and David Dadd had been playing chess when they decided to go for a dip. “We weren’t carrying on or skylarking,” said Dadd. “We swam to the other side of the lake and were on our way back, talking and just doing breaststroke. I heard Beau’s cries for help and I swam back out but I couldn’t find him,” he said. “He had vanished.” Then Dadd swam back to shore and raised the alarm.

Authorities conducted an extensive but unsuccessful search for the swimmer’s body. At 04h00 on Wednesday morning Beau’s father, Neil, said “I’m going to find him’. Neil was paddling his canoe at dawn when he found his son’s body. “I just think it was meant to be that Beau came up in the arms of someone who loved him,” said his mother.

INJURY: The swimmer’s left leg was severed at the knee. A preliminary post-mortem examination indicated he had sustained three bites from a shark before he died. The most serious was a bite to the thigh.

SPECIES INVOLVED: It was thought that a bull shark, *Carcharhinus leucas*, was involved in the attack.

SOURCE: Northern Territory News, December 20, 2002, page 9, et al.

CASE INVESTIGATOR: Terry Peake, GSAF