

**ACTIVITY:** Standing

**CASE:** GSAF 1957.12.20 / SA-118

**DATE:** Friday December 20, 1957

**LOCATION:** The accident took place at Uvongo which is situated 129 kilometres southwest of Durban and 92 kilometres southwest of Karridene where Robert Wherley was bitten by a shark two days earlier. Uvongo is located on the south coast of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa.  $30^{\circ}50,2'S$ ,  $30^{\circ}23,8'E$

**NAME:** Allan Green

**DESCRIPTION:** Allan Green was a 15-year-old male. He had been residing in the United States with his mother and stepfather, but had recently emigrated to South Africa and was living with his father, stepmother and their younger children.

## BACKGROUND

**WEATHER:** Reports vary: according to the local press the sky was clear but the Port Shepstone meteorological station, 12 kilometres from Uvongo, recorded an overcast sky. Temperatures at Port Shepstone ranged from  $21^{\circ}$  to  $26^{\circ}C$  on December 20th, and at 15h00 there was 7/8 cloud cover and a gentle nine-knot northeasterly breeze.

**MOON PHASE:** New Moon, December 21, 1957

**SEA CONDITIONS:** In Durban, 25,000 people were at the beach but the sea was rough; by late morning life-savers had rescued nine people and after noon bathing was banned for two hours. However, at Uvongo the water was comparatively calm. Green was standing on a sandbank on which 1,2-metre waves were breaking. The sandbank was separated from the beach by a deep channel. Apparently the water was clear in the sheltered bathing area at Uvongo, but offshore the sea was discolored by flood waters and laden with plant debris and carcasses of drowned animals. The incident took place an hour after mean high tide and one day before spring tides.

**ENVIRONMENT:** The Vungu River enters a narrow rocky gorge and forms a 23-metre waterfall a kilometre before it reaches the sea; the cascade scours a deep channel and keeps the river mouth open. Both sides of the river are a nature reserve.

**DISTANCE FROM SHORE:** 15 to 30 metres

**DEPTH:** One metre

**TIME:** 16h00



**NARRATIVE:** About 50 swimmers were in the small, nearly landlocked bay but Allan Green was seaward of the crowd. He was in the water with John Digisseley and John's father, who was the first to see the shark and who shouted a warning. John turned around and saw the tail fin of the shark next to Green. The shark grabbed Green and pushed him backwards on the surface through the surf. Witnesses saw the tail of a large shark lash the water. Green screamed and the water reddened with blood. Swimmers formed a human chain across the channel and brought Green to shore. According to Dr Lynch, who examined Green on the beach, the teen died from blood loss before he could be brought ashore.

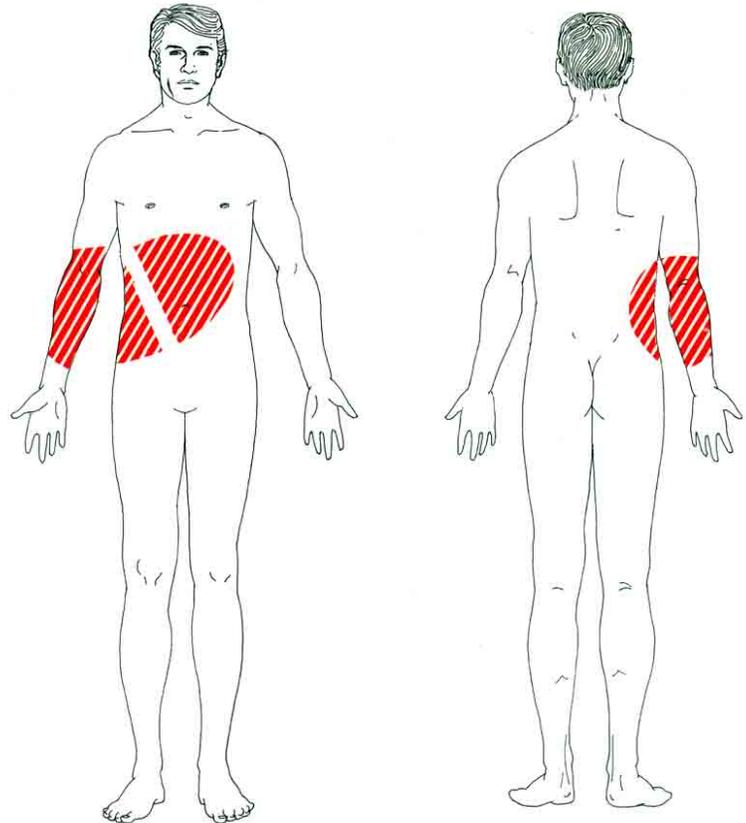
**INJURY:** Green suffered multiple injuries: his right arm was bitten and there were gaping wounds in his abdomen and chest.

**SPECIES INVOLVED:** Not identified. On the day of the accident two sharks were seen off South Beach, Durban.

**COMMENT:** Uvongo Beach residents began a fund to assist shark victims on Sunday 22 December at 09h00 and by 15h00 donations totaled £400.

**SOURCES:** Interview with Aubrey Cowan on October 17, 1986 and interview with Dr. Lynch on January 26, 1989; Natal Mercury, January 10, 1958; Cape Argus, March 4, 1958.

**CASE INVESTIGATOR:** Marie Levine



## SECOND ATTACK IN

# GIANT SHARK KILLED at UVONGO BEACH acc.

## Tragedy Takes Place In Full View Of Bathers

A GIANT shark attacked and killed Allan Green, a 14-year-old Johannesburg schoolboy, while he was swimming less than 30 yards offshore at Uvongo Beach, South Coast, at four o'clock yesterday afternoon.

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*The tragedy took place in full view of a large crowd of bathers. Eye-witnesses looked on, horrified, as they heard Allan screaming and saw the shark's tail lashing the water before it pulled him along the surface and then let go.*

Within minutes, a number of bathers had formed a human chain and recovered Allan's mutilated body from the bloodstained water.

Mr. John Degossely, a 20-year-old Belgian visitor from Johannesburg, told "The Natal Mercury" last night that he had been swimming beside Allan just before he was attacked.

"We were less than 30 yards offshore. I decided to catch a slide back to the beach. On the way back I heard my father shouting, 'shark, shark.' He was standing close inshore.

"I looked round and saw a black tail lashing the water. It was about two to three feet wide.

"The shark grabbed Allan and pulled him along the top of the water. He screamed and the water was full of blood. I scrambled on to the beach and some people immediately formed a chain and pulled Allan out of the water. He was already dead," stated Mr. Degossely.

### Forty Bathers

He added that there were about 40 people bathing in the small landlocked bay when the shark made its attack. He and Allan had been further out than any other bathers, however.

Allan was on holiday at Uvongo with his parents, Mr. and Mrs. W. Green, and his younger brother aged about nine. Their home is at 186 Green Street, Northcliffe, Johannesburg. They had been staying at the Uvongo Hotel for the past three weeks and were due to return home on January 5. Allan was a pupil at the Roosevelt High School, Johannesburg.

### POLICE IN OF

### Constable On Watch

After the tragedy several people reported that they had seen a large shark cruising about offshore and Sgt. Stan Cole, Station Commander of the Margate police, stationed a constable armed with a rifle on a rock promontory.

He maintained his vigil until nightfall but did not sight the shark.

The attack took place 48 hours after another youth, 16-year-old Robert Wehrley, had his left leg bitten off by a shark at Karridene, which is about 50 miles from Uvongo.

Robert, who lives at Aylesbury Flats, Amangzimtoti, was admitted to the African Explosives Hospital at Umbogintwini. Last night his condition was described as "much improved."

### Danger

Mr. Frank Shepard, an authority on angling, said last night that there was a danger that the shark might attack again, having once tasted human blood.

Judging by the size of the tail which was seen, Mr. Shepard said the shark could have been a "ragged tooth" or a "tiger" shark. It could weigh between 400 and 500lb.