The Great White Shark (*Carcharodon carcharias*), also known by the names *white shark* or *white death*, is not the man hunting murderer that popular films and fiction portray it to be. In fact, misconceptions about great white sharks are widespread and deeply embedded in global culture and mythology. Too often, they are portrayed as vicious and menacing monsters that purposely targets helpless humans. This inaccurate portrayal is not rooted in science or in the known behaviors of great whites.

To begin with, many sharks show an aversion to interactions with humans. Great white sharks are no exception. They are normally solitary creatures, although they have been observed to occasionally travel in pairs. While they are opportunistic predators, it has never been proven that great whites attack humans because they consider them a ‘menu item’. The research actually shows the opposite. Great whites repeatedly choose fish, sea lions and seals over humans when given a clear choice.

Deciphering the meaning and reason for attacks on humans, is an ongoing study. The data collected points at other reasons for attacks on humans. Often things like location, time of day, nearby fishing/chumming, spear diving and proximal seal activity are important factors in the determination. While white sharks have been accused of attacks and even fatalities on local surfer populations, it is believed that the surfers on boards have been mistaken for seals due to their motion, movement and outline in the water.

Great white sharks tend to attack by ambush. One of their favorite methods of attacking seals is to ascend with great speed and force towards a seal on the surface. With amazing power and force- they breach the surface of the water and attack the object. To a white shark, a surfer sitting or paddling on a surfboard looks like a seal playing on the surface. They are often surprised by their mistake and release the victim after biting them. The size of the attacking white shark and the location on the human body that they bite is inflicted, may mean the difference between life and death.

Sharks are incredibly tough creatures. They have survived all the mass extinctions on the planet. This is a further testament to their resilience, adaptability and legendary immune systems. In comparison, roughly 95% of all other living species were wiped out by mass extinctions.

Sharks were here first. In fact, they were here millions and millions of years before humans showed up. Sharks are one of the most ancient entities to inhabit the earth, appearing roughly 400 million years ago. There are more than 440 species of sharks in existence and more is being discovered every year. White sharks are found in temperate waters throughout the world. They have been known to swim in varying depths and migratory patterns. They can exist in as little as three feet of water and as deep as 1280 meters. Submersibles have observed great white sharks at depths over 2000 feet

White Sharks are the top ocean predator and they are only prey to humans. Currently, great white sharks are an endangered species due to excessive hunting, finning, and unregulated trade. This ancient king of the ocean is being driven into extinction by humans.

This magnificent upper echelon predator is a regulator of the seas and an evolutionary wonder. Encroaching populations on coastlines and poaching continue to ravage remaining populations. In order to protect the oceans, we will need to protect the sharks. If education and prevention measures are not made a priority, there will be disastrous results. It is possible that this evolutionary wonder will disappear forever. If that happens, the blood will be on *our* hands.