



HANDLE VIA GRONS  
REF 1622-494  
CONTROL SYSTEM

SECRET  
NEREUS

2028-67  
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25 January 1909

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE AND LABOR  
Bureau of Fisheries  
Office of Maritime Survey & Research  
CONFIDENTIAL

INCIDENT REPORT: ANOMALOUS DIVING FATALITY — LA JOLLA CANYON

LOCATION: Marine Biological Association of San Diego, La Jolla, California  
DATE OF INCIDENT: October 4, 1908  
FILED BY: [REDACTED], Acting Research Director

INCIDENT SUMMARY

At approximately 21:30 hours on October 4, 1908, civilian research diver Samuel Wainwright and Marine Biological Association of San Diego (MBA) science director Dr. William Ritter were aboard the research vessel Alexander Agassiz approximately [REDACTED] NM off the La Jolla shoreline. As part of recent research investigation into the "red tide" bioluminescence phenomenon, Wainwright was to conduct a depth survey in the northwest region of La Jolla Canyon, a submarine canyon which MBA researchers had recently traced the "red tide" phenomenon to. At approximately 22:10 hours, Wainwright finished diving preparations and entered the water, equipped with a diving gauge and a 2000 psi steel compressed-air tank.

Communication with Wainwright was maintained via tethered phonograph transmitter until approximately 22:40 hours, at which point transmission became erratic and unintelligible. The erratic communications continued for approximately 6 minutes before ceasing completely.

A recovery team was deployed immediately. Wainwright's lifeline remained unbroken, though it was found slack. At 23:12, the diver's body was retrieved. Despite being submerged for no more than twenty-five

GROUP 1  
Excluded from automatic  
downgrading and  
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minutes, the subject exhibited advanced signs of cyanosis and severe cerebral and ocular hemorrhaging. Post-mortem examination by the San Diego County Coroner's Office revealed extensive tissue deterioration and necrosis inconsistent with known causes of drowning or decompression sickness.

#### ADDITIONAL OBSERVATIONS

1. Prior to 22:47 hours, Wainwright had reported the presence of [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] Wainwright also noted that the fish and other marine life around [REDACTED] appeared to be acting unnaturally, although this was not elaborated upon.

2. Witnesses aboard the vessel reported an anomalous shift in water clarity at the time of the incident, describing [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED], despite clear conditions.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS & ACTIONS TAKEN

1. All further civilian diving operations in La Jolla Canyon have been ceased immediately.

2. Marine Biological Association personnel have been instructed to cease any independent investigation pending further review.

3. This report has been forwarded to the Bureau of Fisheries and the Office of Naval Intelligence for additional assessment.

Due to the unusual nature of this incident, further inquiries are to be handled through official channels only.

[REDACTED]  
Acting Research Director

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